Table of Contents

1. Important Notice
2. Allegiances
3. Prologue
4. Chapter 1
5. Chapter 2
6. Chapter 3
7. Chapter 4
8. Chapter 5
9. Chapter 6
10. Chapter 7
11. Chapter 8
12. Chapter 9
13. Chapter 10
14. Chapter 11
15. A Few Announcements...
16. Author's Note
17. Author's Note!
18. Announcement.
19. Are You Ready For It?
20. Chapter 12
21. Chapter 13
22. Chapter 14
23. Merry Christmas!
24. -PLEASE READ-
25. Chapter 15
26. Chapter 16
27. Chapter 17
28. Chapter 18
29. Chapter 19
30. Chapter 20
31. Chapter 21
32. Chapter 22
33. Chapter 23
34. Chapter 24

35. Chapter 25
36. Chapter 26
37. Chapter 27

Important Notice

Hi guys, Kaylin here!

If you are reading this, I want to thank you so much for so many views, votes and comments on my first book, Skyfall. You mean the world to me, and without you, none of this would be possible.

Speaking of which, if you have not read Skyfall, **turn around now.** This is a **sequel** to that book, meaning the next book in the Skyfall series.

A lot of things happen in that book that you really need to know when you read this one, and it's found on my profile. Go take a look and tell me what you think!

Please continue being the best fans ever!

I hope you enjoy...

Skyfall #2: Skylight

What if you had been chosen?

Allegiances

The cats around the lake are unique in their own special ways, depending on their Clan. For now, I will only be posting ThunderClan's roster, but I may upload the rest of the Clans at a different time.

ThunderClan:

Leader: Sunstar - flaming orange tom with piercing green eyes.

Deputy: Russetsky - Shadowy gray she-cat with light blue eyes. No cat knows the backstory of her name, for it could not contradict her appearance or personality any more than it already does.

Medicine Cat: Willowleaf - beautiful tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes.

Warriors:

Stormpelt - senior gray tom with light gray eyes. Gray specks are starting to appear around his muzzle with his old age.

Bramblefrost - dark brown tabby tom with black stripes and icy blue eyes.

Mousetail - light brown tom with amber eyes.

Duskwave - dark gray she-cat with unusual silver eyes.

Hazelflower - jet black she-cat with uncommon, but pretty, hazel eyes.

Petalheart - white she-cat with reddish pinkish eyes due to an accident with poisonous petals when she was a kit.

Flarecloud - fiery she-cat with bright green eyes.

Firesoul - bright orange tom with mysterious dark green eyes.

Blizzardfur - snowy white she-cat with light blue eyes.

Berrypelt - A black tom with dark blue eyes, the color of blueberries.

Bumblefoot - cream colored tabby tom with black stripes and amber eyes.

Jaysoul - Gray tabby tom with mysterious light blue eyes.

Apprentices:

Rainpaw - light gray, almost white, tabby she-cat with deep blue eyes that remind cats of the lake.

Shadepaw - dark gray, almost black, she-cat with bright green eyes.

Skypaw - silver tabby she-cat with sky blue eyes.

Queens:

Featherfur - silver tabby she-cat with dark blue eyes. Mother of Brackenkit, Amberkit, Brightkit and Spottedkit.

Flowermoon - pretty tortoiseshell she-cat with brown eyes. Expecting a large litter of kits.

Elders:

Appleleaf - brown tabby tom with amber eyes.

Cats Outside of Clans:

Darkface - Ghostly black tom with bright amber eyes.

Prologue

A ghostly dappled she-cat silently trekked through the eerie darkness of the trees around her. Leaves rustled and wind howled, however, she was not afraid.

Hearing voices up ahead, she picked up her pace. She had been roaming this forest for almost a moon, loosing yet another battle with the Clan of Thunder. Loosing her last life in ThunderClan's very camp, she had been denied by her warrior ancestors for countless crimes and the ambition of death for her kin.

Yowls of fighting cats echoed throughout the forest, but she didn't care. Finally, she reached the low-lit clearing where the voices were coming from.

"She has arrived here already," The deep meow of the ThunderClan leader reached her ears.

"I realize," A cat whom she did not recognize replied to the flaming tom. "But she has not found her way to us yet. It has been nearly a moon."

"She will find her way soon," Sunstar promised. "She is too wise to be lost much longer."

Knowing they were talking about her, she bravely stepped out into the small clearing. Sunstar's eyes lit up as they found her ragged pelt, and the other cat, a russet tom, scanned her up and down.

"Hello," The she-cat meowed, "I have found my way."

"Just as I had said," Sunstar looked at the russet tom, who hadn't taken his eerie dark brown, almost black, eyes off of her.

"This is the cat you promised would help you invade StarClan's hunting grounds?" The deep meow of the tom asked. Sunstar nodded.

"She has trained here with me for countless moons," The ThunderClan leader explained. "She knows our ways. She is wise, and her leadership even depended on the killing of the ShadowClan deputy all those seasons ago."

The she-cat nodded, confirming Sunstar's statement. The memory of watching her mate exit the leader's den with his claws unsheathed still made her fur rise approvingly, for Fallenleaf would have made a horrid leader.

"Did she kill this deputy?" The cat's voice was filled with disbelief.

"No," Sunstar replied. "Her mate, the leader of ShadowClan, did. She did not stop him from doing so, but gave her approval." Sunstar looked at the she-cat, nodding. This was the first time in nearly a moon that she had met eye contact with the cat that was her ally for countless seasons. "He is around here somewhere, most likely training with Darkface again."

"I see," The russet tom nodded approval. "What is your name?"

The dappled she-cat cleared her throat before replying, her voice coming out loud and clear. "Dapplestar."

Sunstar and the russet tom nodded, almost in unison. Sunstar's eyes glinted mischievously as he looked at her, Dapplestar waving her tail in acknowledgement.

"You have the look of a Dark Forest warrior," The tom nodded approvingly. Dapplestar gazed down at her pelt.

It was still matted, ragged, and she still reeked of the ShadowClan dirtplace, not bothering to wash even now that she had been denied by StarClan. The whole forest stunk of filth, she blended in well here. No need to be the squeaky clean new cat when she had felt she already lived here, even while she was ShadowClan leader.

Her claws were still unsheathed, dried blood coated them and her paws. Memories of her last few moments of life blasted through her head. This blood belonged to Willowleaf, the ThunderClan medicine cat, and Skypaw, a ThunderClan apprentice and one of her disliked

grandkits.

Her pelt, which would normally shine with stars, was a coated with a ghostly black. She could see right through herself, and her ribs showed through her pelt. She hadn't eaten since she had died, she hadn't bothered hunting in a forest where she figured the prey would be tainted with poison.

"What is this, some test?" Dapplestar asked. "I've trained here for moons, I'm a Dark Forest warrior. What's the big deal? I'm still the same cat."

"Once a fallen warrior has been denied by StarClan, the Dark Forest decides if you are worth having. Any cat that does not survive finding their way to us is lost, their spirit gone forever."

Dapplestar shivered. "Is that why I walked around here for nearly a moon? Alone?"

"Yes," The cat replied. Sunstar decided to cut in.

"This is Bloodstar," He meowed, gesturing to the russet tom. "Leader of the Dark Forest." Dapplestar simply nodded. It didn't surprise her why this tom had gotten his name. His pelt was already a russet color without the dried blood plastered to his unkempt fur in some places.

"Now that you have found us at last," Bloodstar continued. "It is time for StarClan to die."

Chapter 1

"Skypaw, do you see anything?" Skypaw perked her ears as she strived to hear her mentor's voice. Her eyes scanned over the terrain around her as she sat perched on a high, but sturdy, branch. Her claws stung tremendously from holding onto the branch so hard, for she was afraid of slipping on the frosted wood and plummeting to the frozen ground below.

"No, everything is white! Even the bushes just look like piles of snow!" She called back. Gazing directly down below her, she saw the black pelt of Hazelflower staring up at her, along with the light gray fur of her sister, Rainpaw. Skypaw couldn't help but feel sorry for her mentor, because it was obvious hunting in leaf-bare was not the easiest task for her. Her dark pelt could be seen from what seemed like fox lengths away.

Skypaw could see Hazelflower's shoulders raise as her mentor sighed. The she-cat's head turned to Rainpaw, and it appeared the two discussed a few words before Hazelflower's voice reached Skypaw's ears once again. "Okay, you can come down now!"

Skypaw didn't need to be told twice. Although she loved climbing, she was scared out of her fur to do so in leafbare. The branches were always covered with a sleek layer of frost and ice, making it ten times easier for her to fall. And that was *without* snow. When there was snow accompanying the icy dangers that were already there, it became extremely difficult for Skypaw to leap between branches. As the snow piled on the cold wood, it made them look thicker than they actually were, therefor nearly impossible for her to tell which branches were actually thick enough to stand on. One wrong move and she was crowfood.

Skypaw took her sweet time desending down from the tree.
She made sure to study every part of the branch she was planning to jump to next, trying to avoid dangers at all costs. She remembered the time she fell from the Sky Oak as an apprentice, and how boring it was to stay in the medicine den for days at a

time. She didn't want to go through that again, especially in leafbare. If a cat were to get hurt, she wouldn't want it to be her. Willowleaf needed to save her herbs for cats who needed them more than Skypaw did.

Before long, Skypaw was able to leap to the ground. Her landing caused snow to fly up as her paws roughly made contact with the ground, and she shivered when the fluffy flakes showered her pelt. She shook her fur immediately, for she was already cold enough.

"I would never be able to climb as high as you just did in leafbare," Rainpaw commented as Skypaw finished ridding her pelt of snow. It didn't take long for Skypaw to notice that Rainpaw was shivering.

"It's not that bad," Skypaw lied. It was terrifying. "You just have to be extremely careful. Plus, I don't see why you would have to climb a tree any time soon anyway. It's almost completely useless - all you see is snow everywhere."

"Petalheart might make her for training," Hazelflower meowed. "But that's up to her. We should get back to camp and report to Russetsky that we saw nothing unusual."

"Not like that's a huge surprise," Rainpaw muttered. "Who would be out in this weather besides ThunderClan? I can't believe Sunstar's making us patrol in this weather!"

"I heard from Stormpelt that he wants to make sure ShadowClan stay within their own territory," Hazelflower replied. "I mean, they've attacked us twice in five moons. Plus, their leader kind of did die in our camp."

"They attacked us," Skypaw chimed in. "and we didn't kill her. StarClan did because they didn't approve of their attack."

Hazelflower nodded, "That is true. However, that doesn't mean they're happy about it. I mean, their leader dying in their own attack isn't exactly something to take pride in. It's never good for any cat to die in a territory that isn't their own."

~*~

The patrol eventually made it back into camp. Frozen from nose to tail, the three she-cats quickly reported their results to Russetsky, the ThunderClan deputy, before rushing to get something to eat. Together, they ate three small mice, which wasn't nearly enough for three grown cats. But, ThunderClan was reserving as much prey as possible. Featherfur and her kits needed to be fed first, as well as Flowermoon.

However, ever since they started talking about the previous battle with ShadowClan, Skypaw couldn't stop thinking about it. She remembered the way Dapplestar's body lit up in flames as she fell dead. A storm quickly came after the lightning struck, and harsh rains poured down as if it hadn't rained in moons. This obviously put Dapplestar's fire out, and Skypaw remembered the way every cat in the clearing stood frozen with their jaws dropped to the ground. Even Sunstar had a look of pure shock on his face as he stared at his, as Skypaw learned just moments before, dead ally.

Moondust was in a panicked frenzy, and Appleleaf quickly let her go from his grip. The elder had been fighting in that battle, something he shouldn't have been doing but was amazing at. Every cat watched as Moondust ran to her dead leader's body and wailed. The other ShadowClan warriors slowly followed suit, grieving in the rains that fell over ThunderClan's camp.

Although the ShadowClan cats took a few long moments to grieve for their leader, they knew they were not welcomed there. They quickly got Dapplestar's body, the tips of her fur scorched black, and left without another word to the few ThunderClan cats that watched them go.

Much to Skypaw's surprise, Sunstar didn't stop the enemy Clan as they left as quickly as they had came. He simply watched as they padded out of ThunderClan's camp. However, Skypaw knew it was not out of respect. If what Dapplestar had said was true, about Sunstar being her ally, then he must have been grieving as well. *Even dark hearts have to grieve, don't they?* Is what she had wondered that night.

The patrols soon returned, bloody and wounded, signalling ShadowClan had attacked all over the territory. No cat was

seriously injured from ThunderClan, but the news spread like fire of what had happened to the ShadowClan leader. However, much to Skypaw's dismay, the news didn't last very long. It slowly faded away as normal Clan life returned.

Skypaw herself had even tried beyond belief to rid that battle of her memory. The way that her dear friend, Willowleaf, was pounced upon like a mouse underneath a warrior's claws by Dapplestar had haunted her. The thought of losing the ThunderClan medicine cat during an arising prophecy was a terrifying thought, and Skypaw had done her best to rid herself of it. Much to her dismay, she had been successful, focusing intently on training for her warrior assessment. She had been able to be a normal apprentice for the first time in moons, and it felt like a breath of fresh air to her. She enjoyed not having any thoughts of the evil alliance lurking in the back of her mind, and the fact that ThunderClan was half-starved due to the lack of prey had kept her mind occupied. One thing and one thing only was important to the majority of the Clan: to bring home prey.

Suddenly, Skypaw was snapped out of her thoughts. "Skypaw, you okay?" Rainpaw and Hazelflower had worried eyes as they gazed at her. Shaking her head to clear it, Skypaw quickly replied.

"Yeah, I'm just thinking about that battle with ShadowClan. How weird the whole thing was." Skypaw couldn't help but relive the battle as she thought about it. Dread made her paws feel heavy as the impact of remembering the prophecy hit her full force. *Why can't I be normal all the time?*

Hazelflower nodded in agreement. "Definitely one of our most memorable battles. Even though it only happened half a moon ago, there's no doubt that it's going to be passed down in nursery tales."

Skypaw flicked her tail in acknowledgement as she finished off her scrawny mouse. "I think I'm going to go sleep," she meowed, glancing up at the darkening sky. It definitely got darker earlier in leafbare, but Skypaw didn't mind. She appreciated the longer nights, for she had more time to sleep when she was scheduled for dusk patrols.

Hazelflower and Rainpaw said their goodnights as she padded off to her den. She had to admit, she wasn't used to climbing into her nest before Rainpaw, so she missed the warmth of her sister as she curled up, her tail wrapped neatly as it rested on her paws.

Letting herself slowly drift into sleep, she let her mind wander as she fell into a slumber.

Author's Note: Yay! It's finally here!

I don't know what I think about this chapter, but here it is. Vote, comment, and share! I'd love to hear what you guys think, especially since I kept you guys waiting for so long. Thank you for staying with me and reading this!

You guys don't even know what I have in store for the following adventures to come. I seriously have so many plot twists it just makes me so happy. Anyway, stay tuned for Chapter 2!

Chapter 2

Disclaimer: Due to the large absence of updates since Chapter 1, I recommend you to reread it to refresh your memory of Skypaw's latest adventures. I also edited some of it and added a few paragraphs, so it would be your best interest to reread!

What seemed like only moments after she had drifted into a much needed sleep, Skypaw found her paws touching nothing other than snow. Her eyes drifted open as she gazed around at her surroundings, finding herself no where but the ThunderClan forest. Her eyes rested on the Sky Oak as the memory of plummeting from its branches as an apprentice crossed her mind. Although her territory surrounded her, she knew immediately that she had been pulled into a dream.

Normally she would have sat there, dazed and confused, wondering if where she was was reality, but Skypaw had figured that where she was right at that moment was anything but reality. Despite being pulled from her peaceful rest and finding herself in the heart of her territory, she realized that she could not hear the breeze of leaf-bare whisking through leaves of the trees, and she could not feel its cool chill that it would bring with it. She didn't feel the stinging in her paws that the snow would have caused beneath them. ThunderClan's forest had a special calm to it that didn't come during leaf-bare.

Although the atmosphere surrounding her was calm and the terrain showed no threat or worry within its clutches, she could not help but feel confused. Why was she here? Who brought her? Why?

Just as she was about to start trekking through the territory in a search to end her confusion, a voice reached her ears. As soon as it reached her, she spun around, snow flying up behind her due to her quick movements.

"You need to be prepared."

The source of the voice came from no other than Sandstar. At first, Skypaw felt a rush of joy to see the old cat once again, but once she comprehended her grandmother's words she froze, her eyes wide.

"You need to be prepared, Skypaw." Sandstar meowed once again, her green eyes staring into Skypaw's blue ones. The apprentice immediately detected the seriousness and the urgency hidden within Sandstar's seemingly calm voice.

Skypaw was about to reply when she began to take in the appearance of the former ThunderClan leader. Her pelt, normally bright and translucent with the pattern of the stars within it, looked duller. The stars were still there, not a doubt, but Skypaw couldn't help but detect that she she-cat was getting tired out. *This can only signal one thing*, the apprentice thought, *StarClan must be growing weary*.

"P-prepared?" Skypaw stuttered over her words, trying to pull herself from her thoughts and concentrate on why her grandmother stood before her. Shaking her head briefly, she looked over at Sandstar expectantly.

"Yes, prepared." The sandy she-cat responded without hesitation. "You are aware of the prophecy. You are aware of the alliance between Dapplestar and Sunstar. You are aware of the grudge and resent ShadowClan has towards ThunderClan, Skypaw. Why wouldn't you be prepared?"

Skypaw stood there, once again finding herself getting lost in thought. She wasn't sure about what to reply to the leader. She was aware of all of those things, of course, but she had done her absolute best to try to forget. She had forgotten her important role in the future of her Clan. Trying to get words to roll off her tongue to hide her, what she figured was, irresponsibility, she thought quickly.

"Dapplestar is still a problem?" Immediately after she spoke, she wanted to ram her head into a tree. *Of course Dapplestar is still a problem, mousebrain! As if the Dark Forest didn't exist!*

Skypaw's ears felt hot as she saw how dumbfounded her

grandmother looked. Sandstar looked at her as if she thought she had to be joking, and Skypaw took the opportunity. "I-I mean, of course she's still a problem, but is she an immediate threat?"

Sandstar, looking more at ease, nodded. "Dapplestar will stop at nothing, Skypaw, nothing to get what she wants. Not even death can stop her. Not even death could part her from her dying wish. Not to mention, Sunstar is just the perfect outlet she needs to get forces rising within the Clans to destroy everything they stand for."

"I knew this battle wasn't ready to be put to rest!" Skypaw exclaimed. "ThunderClan has stopped talking about it. They've let it go, especially since there's nothing unusual about the ShadowClan border. It's only been half a moon, and all they talk about is how it will someday be passed down in nursery tales!"

"Nothing about this is ready to be put to rest, period," Sandstar meowed, nodding her head in agreement. "If anything, it needs to be talked about. Defense is key here. I can only imagine what kind of battle Dapplestar is planning with the Dark Forest, and you can bet your tail that Sunstar is in on it. He was the last battle, he will be the next."

Skypaw, even after all the moons she's known about Sunstar's hidden betrayal and all the secrets that are buried underneath his pelt, couldn't believe that he would want ThunderClan to die. She just couldn't believe that a cat would work so hard to become leader, be one of the most respected cats in the Clans, only to spit on everything the Clans have. *How could a cat with countless blessings be the same cat that wishes to destroy them all?*

"Skypaw, listen," The former ThunderClan leader's voice was soft and calm, catching the young apprentice off guard. The conversation was just starting to rise in intensity only to come crashing down into a calm chat. She cocked her head and nodded, encouraging the the starry cat to continue to speak her thoughts. "I know how hard it is for you to be the chosen cat sometimes," Sandstar's eyes were green pools of sympathy. "but you need to make sure you keep your eyes open, keep your tail held high. StarClan needs you to stop trying to forget who you are and what role you play in the future of your Clan, and instead we need you to

strive to remember. You're the sky in the prophecy. Remember, you are the sky that will fall on the sun to save ThunderClan, and there's no way around that."

The young she-cat's vision began to blur as the ground beneath her paws started to swirl. The StarClan cat that stood before her began to fade as her parting words echoed within Skypaw's mind. A pang of guilt seized her as she realized how badly StarClan needed her to focus. She had tried too hard to forget the battle with ShadowClan that sent the ShadowClan leader up in flames. She had wished too hard to be like the rest of her Clan, like her littermates, just to move on with life. She had wanted too hard to disconnect herself from her part of the prophecy, as the words that she had received still confused her as she could not comprehend the meaning behind them. She knew that she was the sky that would fall on the sun, she most definitely knew. Although knowing that was the easy part, the part that she struggled with the most was to...

Never forget.

Author's Note: GUYS I TOLD YOU I WOULD UPDATE AGAIN! I know it's been forever and I am completely aware of the fact that this most definitely is not my best work (it sucks pretty bad, to be honest) but I knew that I needed to get this show on the road again. I don't want to make this note too long because I honestly want to get back to writing, but I want to thank you for everyone who stuck with me during this large leave of absence (over a year!) and continued to encourage me to finish this story. I have come a long way as an author since I started this story in seventh grade, and although I do want to be working on something original I owe it to each and every one of you to give the rest of this plot (besides this chapter because once again, it sucks) my all!

You are completely unaware of all the appreciation I have towards all my readers, from the ones who followed me in June 2014 all the way to the ones who followed me yesterday. I can assure you that although updates may not be consistent, there definitely won't be another one year gap between chapters. That was really ridiculous and I honestly can't believe I just fell off the face of the Earth for that long.

Anyway, although this chapter wasn't very long or very exciting, please remember that this is only the beginning of the book and I need some type of filler chapters to really get the story going. And, as I bet you all know, I really do enjoy plot twists and cliffhangers, so expect to see some of those very soon. It's Friday, so that means I will try to have Chapter 3 out before school resumes on Monday. First semester just ended for me last week and thanks to everyone who messaged me privately wishing me good luck on my exams!

As always, please comment constructive criticism (nicely please, I don't need to be told how bad my work is and instead need to be told how to improve) and predictions of what is to come!

Special thanks to Elaina (@_Elaina_) for helping me brainstorm and giving me some nice words of motivation and encouragement. Give her a follow!

Thanks again, guys!

-Kaylin

(P.S., I briefly skimmed over this so the proof reading isn't very thorough. If you see a typo please let me know so I can quickly fix it to make the reading experience better for everybody).

Chapter 3

Skypaw snapped awake. Sandstar's words were still buzzing in her head as she gazed around the dark den. Her sisters had joined her sometime while she was asleep, speaking to the cat that most of her Clan hadn't thought of in moons.

The gaps in between the leaves and twigs that made up the shelter couldn't be seen. The light given off by the stars and the moon would usually shine through them, but Skypaw figured that it must have been a cloudy night. The fact that Silverpelt refused to show itself and its light after her summoning by StarClan made her paws itch and gave her an uneasy feeling.

The apprentice decided that it would be best to get some fresh air instead of cowering in her nest alone with her thoughts. She knew she wasn't going to get much more sleep, and instead of laying there for hours to come, she wanted to make herself somewhat useful. Maybe she would try to tidy up the camp or strengthen the gorse tunnel. Climbing to her paws, she stretched briefly before ducking out of her sleeping place.

The camp, as she anticipated, was dark. She gazed up and found that clouds indeed covered the night sky. Every cat was in their den, the chill of leafbare driving them to their nests for the night. Skypaw found this to be unusual that Sunstar or Russetsky wouldn't place a cat to guard the camp, but she decided that she didn't want to question it. She had far more things to question than why there wasn't a guard standing in front of the tunnel.

The fresh-kill pile, that would normally be stocked with a large pile of prey in greenleaf, was completely empty. The remaining prey had been buried in the Clan's best efforts to preserve it.

Skypaw sighed. Her eyes scanned the camp over and over as she focused her mind on her dream. Sandstar needed her to focus, but she didn't know if her grandmother actually realized how full her paws were. She needed to pass her warrior assessment if she wanted

her Clan to respect her, and she assumed the prophecy needed the Clan on her side. She needed to hunt as much as possible, searching the forest for any type of available nutrients that could help the queens, kits, and the rest of her Clan. The whole Clan was stressed, for this leafbare was harsher than any one that Skypaw had ever experienced. She remembered the way Appleleaf told her about all the leafbares he'd experienced, and it made her paws heavy with dread as she realized how many leafbares she had left to experience in her own lifetime. She should be grateful that she was still young and had her whole life ahead of her, but leafbares were not easy to live in at all.

However, above all Clan responsibilities, another thought lurked her mind. She had to make sure everything in the Clan was done, but she also had to make sure that she had time to continue to visit a cat that had more meaning to her every time she saw him.

Hawkspirit.

Skypaw had continued to visit the ShadowClan medicine cat repeatedly at the Gathering island. She had no set pattern of when she went to meet him, which she figured was better in case any cat noticed something going on. She didn't want to leave a trail behind her, and she decided that being missing during the dark nights was better if done at random times. She hoped that it would diminish any suspicion of her whereabouts, and so far it seemed to be working. No cat had questioned her about her disappearances.

Sitting down on the layer of snow that covered the camp, she ignored how cold it was. She imagined his pelt and his eyes in the scenery of the island, and she had remembered their conversations. She remembered mrrowing in laughter at least once every time she was in his presence, and she remembered the game they had played of racing to the top of the big tree. She could remember the way the four main branches smelled of the Clan leaders that sat there the previous moon, and the way her tail spiked if she stayed on Sunstar's branch for too long.

Skypaw had thought long and hard about her meetings with Hawkspirit, and she had decided that no real harm was being done by meeting him. They weren't exchanging Clan information much,

and they definitely weren't spilling Clan secrets. In fact, the backgrounds of which the two cats came from barely was mentioned at all. They were there to escape their Clans for a little while, now, weren't they?

There had been once or twice where Rainpaw had stirred in her sleep when Skypaw returned to her nest, but on the rare occasion she did wake up, Skypaw just said she went to the dirtplace. She felt guilty about lying to Rainpaw, no doubt about it, but she didn't want her sisters thinking she was a traitor to her Clan. Skypaw insisted to herself that since no harm was being done that there was no way she could be considered disloyal in the long run.

Except for the warrior code.

The warrior code became something that the silver she-cat tried to forget, along with the battle with ShadowClan. She knew its rules like the back of her paw, and she had never done anything to break it. The number one rule was to defend your Clan at all costs, and it stated she was allowed to have friends from other Clans as long as she was able to fight them. She knew she could do this, but she liked to tell herself that even if Hawkspirit wasn't exempt from fighting she would fight against him. However, him being a medicine cat gave her relief, knowing that she wouldn't have to fight him anyway.

Although she was aware that the warrior code allowed her to have friends in other Clans, she knew that meeting a medicine cat in secret at the Gathering island crossed the line of what the code considered having friends. She knew that it was talking about Gatherings, and times when Clans were strongly allied. She also knew that those weren't the circumstances she was under.

Skypaw perked her ears as she heard an owl's call not too far away. She jumped slightly, she was used to the quietness that leafbare brought upon the forest. Gazing up in the branches of the trees above her, her eyes rested on the bird that was strangely looking right at her.

Skypaw got a bad feeling as she made eye contact with the owl's unusually green eyes. She cocked her head, curious, since she had

never seen an owl with green eyes before. Admittedly, she hadn't seen many owls at all, but all of them she had seen usually had either orange or amber eyes. The uneasy feeling strengthened when she felt as if she had seen those eyes before, the pang of familiarity pulling her from her thoughts.

Skypaw's head snapped away from the owl when she heard a few pebbles tumble down from the cliff of the Highledge. She braced herself for what she knew was coming, and her eyes slowly rose from the ground all the way up to the leader's ledge. Fiery orange paws came into view, then a fiery orange pelt, then a fiery orange face. Finally, her eyes met piercing green eyes.

The owl flew off the branch it was perched on, landing on a branch of a tree that was next to the Highledge. Skypaw's eyes switched from the owl's eyes to Sunstar's, and she knew immediately where she had seen those eyes from.

The eyes shared the same mischievous gleam, the same evil, yet clever, look to them. The eyes had the same depth to them. They were almost exactly the same.

The owl then blinked slowly before letting out a screech. It turned and flew upwards, expertly through the branches, and out of the apprentice's sight. The screech had struck her as a screech of triumph, a screech of strength, maybe even a battle call.

Skypaw's paws itched to run as the leader's deep voice called down to her.

"Can I help you?"

Chapter 3 out in less than 24 hours whattttt?

Hopefully this is a better chapter. Not too exciting, but I did say that there had to be some filler chapters. And I made sure to mention Hawkspirit, because let's face it, he's almost equally as interesting as the prophecy is.

Thanks for all the votes and comments of encouragement that I got on Chapter 2! I'm so glad that you guys decided to wait for

an update, even though it was wayyy too long of a wait. I'm positive many people deleted Skyfall and Skylight from their libraries long ago, and I completely understand that. I do, however, hope they'll find their way back!

Do I dare say Chapter 4 for tomorrow? Do I? I don't know...but we'll see!

Proof reading again isn't too great on this one, so if you guys see something that doesn't make sense/something that is spelled incorrectly (I did catch that I spelled "sight" as "site" while I was proof reading...DANGIT KAYLIN) please let me know in the comments!

Thanks for reading!

Chapter 4

"N-No!" Skypaw stuttered, the owl's screech still echoing in her ears. "I just couldn't sleep, so I decided to get some fresh air."

Sunstar's green eyes narrowed into slits, and Skypaw shifted uneasily. *Why is he looking at me like that? It's not like I'm lying!*

Sunstar's gaze pierced Skypaw's fur harder than the owl's talons gripped the branch. Skypaw shifted uneasily on her paws while she waited for her leader to say something. Sunstar's eyes glanced towards the gorse tunnel to see who else was listening, but perked his ears when he noticed the tunnel was left unguarded.

"Who is supposed to be guarding the camp?" He questioned, walking down the rocks. His voice was quieter than it had been, and Skypaw suspected that he was talking mainly to himself. Unsure on whether or not he had intended her to reply, she awkwardly watched him reach the ground.

"What's going on?" A tired Russetsky ducked out of the Warriors' den, blinking the sleep from her eyes. She must have heard the two cats' voices coming from the clearing, especially because Sunstar's deep meow was far from quiet.

"Why is the camp left unguarded?" Sunstar's accusing tone caused Russetsky's gaze snap up to meet his. After staring at him for a moment she glanced at the gorse tunnel behind him with a questioning look in her eyes.

"I'm not sure," She admitted. Skypaw's paws itched to go back into the apprentices' den. When she had come out here, she had intended to be alone, definitely not listening in on a discussion between her leader and her deputy. Despite the fact that Russetsky was her beloved mother, she still felt extremely out of place. However, she couldn't help but feel thankful that Russetsky had joined them. That was the first, and hopefully the last, one-on-one

discussion she would have with the twisted ThunderClan leader. "I assigned Mousetail to guard the camp. He's supposed to be right there."

Skypaw's blood turned to ice as her leader's gaze hardened at the mention of the brown tom. Glancing uneasily at the fiery cat, Skypaw vividly remembered Willowleaf explaining to her that Mousetail witnessed the murder of Moonfur all those moons ago, and has been sworn under secrecy ever since. *This can't be good for Mousetail!* Skypaw thought to herself. *Sunstar already doesn't like him!*

Skypaw inhaled deeply, watching her breath turn into a frosty cloud as she breathed out. Russetsky's eyes flicked to her daughter, and it appeared as though she forgot Skypaw was even there. Glancing up at the sky, which had started to lighten as the sun rose, she sighed. "I'll have a talk with Mousetail," She said at last.

"No," Sunstar meowed, his voice low. "I will have a talk with him. I need to ensure that he understands his duties as a warrior."

Russetsky nodded briskly. Skypaw's heart began to beat heavily in her chest and her paws itched in worry for the young brown tom.

~*~

"Hazelflower!" Russetsky's voice rang throughout the clearing to wake the camp. After their discussion, Sunstar had retreated to his den, and Russetsky decided it was time to plan patrols for the day. Cats began to slowly emerge from their dens, ready to hear how they would serve the Clan this time around.

Hazelflower's black pelt was seen as she ducked out of the warriors' den. Her hazel eyes blinked at Russetsky expectantly.

"You're going to lead the dawn patrol today," Skypaw's mother meowed, "It's been awhile since you've led." The shadowy she-cat's eyes swept the clearing as she looked for cats to organize into the rest of the patrol. "Petalheart will join you, along with Rainpaw and Skypaw."

Hazelflower and Skypaw both nodded as Petalheart and Rainpaw joined the cats in the clearing. Rainpaw yawned and stretched while Petalheart blinked repeatedly, trying to awaken her red eyes. Skypaw's gaze swept the clearing when her eyes unintentionally landed on Mousetail, sitting in the clearing, listening to orders. A pang of worry surged through her as she remembered Sunstar's angry gaze from early that morning. She had returned to her den and Russetsky had decided to guard the camp for the short remainder of the night.

Mousetail, clearly clueless about his mistake, seemed content as he waited patiently to hear his name. Skypaw couldn't understand how he could act perfectly normal even though he knew their leader was a foxhearted murderer. Sure, she knew of it too, but she had someone to talk about it with. Willowleaf knew just as much as Skypaw did, so she felt as if she weren't so alone. Mousetail, on the other hand, had no knowledge that anyone else knew besides Sunstar himself, and had to keep that knowledge brewing inside of him, eating him alive.

"This worked out well," Petalheart commented as she looked at the patrol. "We can go training after we check the borders. Time's running out!" Her reddish eyes gleamed with excitement for the two apprentices.

Skypaw, tearing her gaze reluctantly from the scrawny brown tom, shared a glance with Rainpaw. Rainpaw bounced in excitement. Skypaw tried to share her enthusiasm, but her brain was buzzing with stressful information.

"That's right!" Hazelflower chirped as she began to lead the three cats through the gorse tunnel. Russetsky's scent was strong from when she had guarded it briefly that morning. "Soon, ThunderClan will be welcoming three new warriors!"

"And apprentices!" Rainpaw meowed excitedly, "Featherfur's kits are growing up so fast! It feels like their nursery days went quicker than ours!"

Skypaw nodded in agreement. The four kits were developing so quickly, Skypaw could hardly believe it herself. The once tiny,

vulnerable kits had turned into independent balls of energy. Well, as independent as kits could be, that is.

Setting out into the forest, the four she-cats maintained subtle conversation as their eyes scanned the terrain and their ears took in the still forest. Leafbare had kept prey away for over a moon now. The only movement in ThunderClan territory came from the cats themselves and the windy breeze of leafbare. Sunstar had the Clan under strict orders to hunt any prey they saw, which was reasonable. As much as Skypaw hated to admit Sunstar was right about something, she couldn't deny this was a necessary measure of action.

Hazelflower and Petalheart were several fox lengths ahead of the two littermates, involved in their own conversation. Skypaw and her sister trekked behind them, checking the border thoroughly. The ShadowClan scent line was so strong that Skypaw thought their dawn patrol must have only just passed by.

Skypaw's memories tugged at her as they made their way around. She remembered being within ShadowClan's territory, chasing after the exiled Willowleaf. She thought about the frogs that she had seen and shivered slightly, still baffled on how a cat could eat such a thing.

Sensing her sister's shiver, Rainpaw glanced over at Skypaw. "Are you that cold?" She asked, puzzled. "I thought it wasn't too bad today."

"No," Skypaw responded, returning Rainpaw's glance. "I'm just thinking."

"About what?" The light gray she-cat inquired, obviously curious. "It made you shiver, so it can't be good."

Not wanting to get into the conversation of her runaway a few moons back, she thought quickly. "I heard Mousetail didn't guard the camp like he was supposed to," She meowed, instantly regretting letting the words slip out of her mouth. *I'm not one to gossip!*

Rainpaw let out a mew of surprise. "Really? Mousetail? That sure doesn't sound like him. Maybe there was a misunderstanding."

Now it was Skypaw's turn to be surprised. "How would you know what he's like? It's not like you're all that friendly to each other."

Rainpaw, suddenly growing nervous, spoke slowly, as if she were choosing her words carefully. "We've been talking a lot lately," She admitted, "He's actually not a bad cat. He's always working so hard for the Clan, and he always puts others before himself, like yesterday he gave me the last vole in the pi-"

Skypaw was listening intently to her sister's words, wondering if she was starting to catch some feelings for the brown tom. However, before Rainpaw could finish her sentence, there was an earsplitting yowl of surprise ahead of them.

Skypaw looked up just in time to see the black pelt of Hazelflower plummet as the snow beneath the black warrior's paws suddenly vanished.

Hi guys! It has definitely been awhile!

Here's a very late Chapter 4 for you! Since it's still quite early in the book, not very much exciting business happens this chapter. However, I was sure to leave you with something to look forward to (okay, maybe not look forward to) next chapter, which WILL be coming out very soon. I'm already planning on writing it after this chapter is posted!

I had quite a long Wattpad hiatus, in case you hadn't noticed. However, once I think I'm officially done with Warriors, it always comes back to me. I'll tell you, I'll probably still be writing fanfictions on Wattpad when I'm thirty. Now that my interest in Warriors is back and better than ever, please stick around for what Skypaw has to come.

I reread Skyfall (yes, I reread my own book) and the beginning chapters of Skylight over the past two days to really refresh

myself on her whereabouts. Along the way, I read a lot of your guys' comments that I missed, and I gotta tell you guys, some of you are really hilarious. I responded to quite a few of you with "LOL" or "HAHAA OMG" and stuff like that, because you seriously had me laughing.

On a more serious note, Skyfall has reached 129,000 views, 7,000 votes, and 4,000 comments. As I was rereading the book I would also read my old author's notes, which would say something like "thanks for 200 views!" and I just really got overwhelmed with pride on how far this series has actually come. I've done interviews, I've caught the attention of some really big warriors accounts, I've gotten my fanfic up to one of the most popular Warriors fanfics on Wattpad. At the end of the day, I really owe that success to nobody but you guys. You have supported me from day one, during the thick and thin, through the ups and downs, and I am truly thankful. I will always forever be thankful. Thank you so much!

I also have some fun ideas for my page too. I'm thinking about writing a Skyfall trivia book, which I think would be pretty fun! I would ask questions like "Who said this quote?" and things like "What is *insert cat*'s heritage?" as well as "Who was the leader before *insert cat*?" I would give out some pretty awesome prizes as well for whoever says the correct answer first, such as choosing a character's warrior name (one that I hadn't already planned), or choosing a kit's name, or the next medicine cat apprentice, etc. It could also have something like having your OC brought into the book somehow!

Like I said though, that's only an idea. I get really into choosing certain names for my characters because I'm a weirdo for backstories. If you guys would want to see that, please let me know down below!

Please share my story with your friends if you enjoy it! Don't forget to vote too! Thanks!

-Kaylin

Chapter 5

Skypaw and Rainpaw immediately bolted towards the hole Hazelflower had fallen into. Hazelflower had landed with a sickening thud, and Skypaw's heart was beating out of her chest when she didn't hear her mentor make another sound.

"What in StarClan?!" Petalheart yowled, completely shocked. Skypaw and her littermate approached the hole carefully, unsure about how stable the edge was. Hazelflower had fallen out of no where, there was no telling what ground was safe around here!

"Hazelflower?!" Skypaw hollered into the hole, peering inside of it. The ditch that had eaten her mentor was quite deeper than Skypaw had expected. She had thought her mentor would be able to climb out with some help, but this was definitely not the case.

"Holy StarClan!" A dazed Hazelflower called out, shaking her head to clear it.

"Skypaw, go get a rescue party from camp, now!" Petalheart ordered, not taking her eyes off of Hazelflower. "Are you okay?" She called down into the trench.

"I think so," The black she-cat replied. Skypaw nodded before taking off, for she had waited to hear her mentor's response.

Her hind paws caused snow to fly up behind her as she left the scene of the accident. Fear for Hazelflower overtook her emotions. *What if she won't be okay?*

Skypaw thought of the young warrior not only as her mentor, but as her friend. She had thought this for a long time, but the worry she felt for her came from a relationship other than mentor and apprentice. This was a worry for her close friend.

Approaching camp quickly, her paws skidding and sliding on the icy paths, she yowled a warning call. She wanted to make her

presence known as soon as possible, she wanted to grab the Clan's attention so the party could begin to assemble.

Bursting through the gorse tunnel, she saw that her call had worked. All the cats in the clearing had stopped whatever they had been doing and stared at her with round, fearful eyes. Featherfur had hoarded her kits into the nursery and had her head sticking out of the den entrance. Flowermoon was visible behind her, waiting to hear what was going on.

Appleleaf had ducked his head out of the elders' den. Warriors were spilling out of their den and Shadepaw clumsily emerged from her nest. Sunstar was on his way down the rocks that led to his den. Willowleaf still had herbs in her mouth from sorting.

"It's Hazelflower!" Skypaw meowed frantically. "She's fallen into a ditch!"

Willowleaf nodded and immediately ducked into her den to grab some herbs. Voices from the Clan spoke hectically, but Skypaw couldn't make out any of it. "We need a rescue party, she's stuck!"

"Russetsky, take care of this." Sunstar meowed flatly before turning around and heading back up to his den. *Unbelievable!* Skypaw thought. *A warrior is in trouble and you don't even care enough to organize a rescue patrol!*

Surprised murmurs rippled through the clearing. Appleleaf scowled at the exiting leader, and Bramblefrost looked like he was about to protest, but Russetsky's orders silenced the Clan.

"I want Bumblefoot, Blizzardfur, Duskwave, Bramblefrost and Shadepaw to come with me!" The shadowy warrior ordered. "We need all the help we can get. Plus, we will need to patch up the hole after we've rescued Hazelflower. Also, Willowleaf, please join us as quickly as possible."

The tortoiseshell she-cat emerged from her den, her mouth full of bundles of herbs. She muffled something inaudible and joined the patrol at the camp entrance.

"Alright, let's go!" Russetsky led the cats through the gorse tunnel before stopping abruptly. "Skypaw, can you show us the way?"

Skypaw nodded, weaving through the group of cats to where her mother was. Flicking her tail, she led the rescue patrol at a brisk pace, careful to avoid any ice patches that could cause more injuries.

The group of cats were discussing rescue tactics together quickly, trying to problem solve as quickly as possible. Hazelflower had said she thought she was alright, but Willowleaf had made it clear on the way that she wanted the black warrior in her den as soon as possible.

Arriving at the scene, Rainpaw and Petalheart's eyes shone with relief as they saw help had arrived.

Scenting the patrol, Hazelflower called, "Woah! Skypaw, did you bring the whole Clan with you?"

At least she still has her sense of humor, Skypaw thought. *If it were me in that hole, I would be a mess!*

Russetsky let out a meow of surprise when she looked at the depth of the hole. Hazelflower's hazel eyes blinked up at her expectantly, waiting to hear how she would be freed. Blizzardfur and Bumblefoot slowly crept to the edge, carefully peering down inside.

"Hazelflower," Willowleaf meowed, pushing in between the two warriors. She had set her herbs down under a bush to shelter them from the group's paws. "Where are you hurt?"

Hazelflower hesitated. She stared at the floor of the ditch. Skypaw knew her mentor was debating on whether or not to admit to any injuries, but it was no use. You simply couldn't hide from Willowleaf.

Picking up on Hazelflower's thoughts as well, Willowleaf meowed, "I'll find out no matter what you say. A few days in the medicine den is better than getting an infected wound!"

The ThunderClan warrior sighed. "My shoulder hurts," She

admitted. "But it's not *that* bad! I can still train Skypaw!"

"I'll be the judge of that," The tortoiseshell replied. Stepping back, she approached her deputy. "She's fine for now, no critical injuries," Willowleaf gave a stern glance to the rescue patrol, who were all watching her. "Be careful when transporting her so you don't make her shoulder worse. She'll be off her paws for a few days, but it could be longer if she's moved the wrong way."

Russetsky nodded, relief in her eyes. "Thank you, Willowleaf," She ducked her head to the medicine cat. Willowleaf flicked her tail in acknowledgement. "I think our best option here is to find a stick long and sturdy enough to support Hazelflower. That way we can pull her out of the hole while she uses her remaining legs to climb up the wall of the ditch."

Bramblefrost nodded. "She shouldn't need to use her bad shoulder at all," He added. "Bumblefoot and I can support her back to camp."

"Very well, then," The ThunderClan deputy nodded at her patrol. "Everyone, split up. We need to find a good branch as quickly as possible."

Skypaw immediately turned around and headed out into the snowy forest. She used her paw to shuffle through some dead branches that had fallen out of a tree above, testing their strength. Deciding they weren't stable enough, she continued on.

Deciding there would be strong branches near the Sky Oak, she made her way to the gigantic tree. She was reminded about her stay in Willowleaf's den after she had fallen from the massive oak, and she felt a pang of sympathy for her mentor. Being in Willowleaf's care wasn't exactly enjoyable.

Padding on, her paws chilled from the snow beneath them. She was just about to resume her search for branches when her eyes made contact with chilling amber ones.

Darkface!

Sorry! This isn't the best chapter ever, but I'm really trying to

start picking up the story. I hope you guys aren't bored, things will get better soon! I promise!

As said, here's Chapter 5 today. Thank you so much for your guys' support. It still blows my mind when I publish a chapter and then immediately hit refresh, and see that 5 people have already voted for it when it's only been up for a second. It's amazing!

I'll probably get Chapter 6 out tomorrow. I'm going to be updating pretty regularly from now on, so please stay tuned.

Thanks for reading!

Chapter 6

Skypaw skidded slightly as she stopped where she was. Darkface's amber eyes kept staring at her. She stared right back, unsure of how to react.

After a few moments, she stuttered, "D-Darkface! What are you doing here? Leave!" Skypaw glanced around her, making sure no other cat saw or heard her interaction with the Dark Forest warrior.

"I need to talk to you and Willowleaf," He meowed lowly, blinking once. He stepped out of the bushes, his ragged ghostly pelt visible to any cat who walked by. Skypaw's eyes darted around once more, worried that someone would spot them.

"W-Why?" She asked, unsure of what to think. She had met this cat before at the Gathering place when Willowleaf was still exiled. Sure, Darkface wasn't a total stranger, but he definitely wasn't a friend or an acquaintance.

His history made the whole situation much more eerie than it already was for Skypaw. This cat was Willowleaf's littermate, and he was banished to the Dark Forest by StarClan for murdering their mother. Skypaw still didn't know how he died or why he killed their mother exactly, and she wasn't going to ask. Willowleaf would tell her if she wanted her to know, and she understood that.

"Because I have information," He meowed. His eyes stared Skypaw down, showing her that this was important.

"I - We -" She tried to come up with a decent response, but she simply didn't have one. They couldn't just stop what they were doing! They were in a Clan and they had duties. Hazelflower was still stuck in a ditch and Willowleaf was going to be occupied with the task of attending to her shoulder. *We don't have time for this!*

Darkface continued to stare at her expectantly. Shuffling uncomfortably on her paws, Skypaw meowed quickly, "We can't right now."

"Why not?" The deceased cat asked, looking her up and down. "You don't look very busy to me."

"Haz-" Not wanting to reveal anything about ThunderClan's warriors, she stopped herself. "One of our warriors has fallen into a ditch and we're trying to rescue her. Willowleaf is busy trying to help, and so am I."

"Walking through the territory is helping?" Darkface's tone was slightly accusatory. Skypaw knew that it appeared as if she was just wandering around, and she looked away awkwardly. She was growing nervous. *If this cat could kill his own mother, he could kill me too, no problem! StarClan knows what will happen if I get on his bad side!*

"I wasn't just walking," Skypaw retorted. She definitely did not want to anger the Dark Forest warrior, but she didn't want to appear fearful, either. Vulnerable cats were easier to attack, that was common knowledge. "I was looking for a branch that could help the rescue. I was on my way to the Sky Oak."

Darkface's tail lashed. "Can't you see this is important? I need to talk to Willowleaf at least!"

"She's a medicine cat!" Skypaw argued, "And we have an injured warrior! We can't right now! We have Clan duties, you know."

Darkface looked away, defeated. "Fine. But it's urgent and we need to speak soon. Can you meet me at the Gathering island at moonhigh?"

Skypaw's paws filled with dread. Another cat she had to meet at the Gathering island? Hawkspirit was one thing, Darkface was another. He was a Dark Forest warrior!

However, curiosity nagged at Skypaw's pelt. What kind of information did the ghostly cat have? Did something new happen in

the Dark Forest that her and Willowleaf weren't aware of?

Skypaw nodded slowly. "Okay," She meowed at last. Darkface had traveled to ThunderClan territory in broad daylight to try to speak to her. It *had* to be important. "I'll see you at moonhigh."

Darkface nodded. He flicked his tail in farewell before his sheer pelt began to fade. He kept his eyes on her until there was nothing but air where he had been standing. This still amazed Skypaw, despite the fact that StarClan cats had the same ability. All she knew was that she had never witnessed a StarClan cat do it, and she'd be amazed when she saw that, too.

Hazelflower! Skypaw's thoughts were urgent. She had almost forgotten about her mentor, trapped in the cold ditch, surrounded by snow. She had just talked about her to Darkface, but the reality of it had slipped her mind. How could she stand around chit chatting while her mentor, injured and alone, sat down there, waiting to be rescued?

Picking up her pace into a run, she darted for the Sky Oak. To her relief, she saw an abundance of twigs and branches on the sides of the paths around the tree from when warriors had cleared the pathways. Looking through them quickly, she found one that she believed would be able to stand the black she-cat's weight. Carrying it in her mouth, she took off once again at a brisk pace towards the ditch.

Her heart sank when she got to the scene just in time to see the black warrior being hauled over the edge of the hole, her scruff in Bramblefrost's mouth. The rescue patrol had all returned. Everyone had helped but her.

Willowleaf was immediately at Hazelflower's side, checking out her injured shoulder. Hazelflower winced as she tried to place her paw on the icy ground.

"Where have you been?" Skypaw's eyes darted to Blizzardfur. The white warrior had been the only one to notice Skypaw's return.

"I was looking for a stick," Skypaw meowed quickly. She was

stricken with guilt. How could she have thought a conversation with a Dark Forest warrior was more important than Hazelflower's rescue?

"Duskwave found one," Blizzardfur responded. "She found it right underneath the Sky Oak. I wish I had thought to look there, it was a perfect spot. Where'd you find that one?"

Skypaw realized that Duskwave had most likely been at the Sky Oak while she was talking to Darkface. Thinking quickly, she meowed, "On the outskirts of the territory. That's why it took me so long to get back," The guilt she was feeling strengthened with her lie. "I wish I had looked at the Sky Oak too. It was obviously a lot quicker."

Blizzardfur nodded before turning her attention back to Hazelflower. Petalheart, Bumblefoot, and Rainpaw were beginning to weave sticks together to cover the hole with to avoid more accidents. The rest of the patrol was focused on Hazelflower, who looked uncomfortable with all the attention.

"I'm fine, really," The black warrior meowed, "You can all go. I'm sure there's things that need to be done in camp,"

"Nonsense," Russetsky responded. The shadowy deputy had taken a seat next to Hazelflower. "You're not fine unless Willowleaf says you're fine. There are cats in camp that can take care of everything there."

"It's not broken," Willowleaf concluded. "But it is sprained. You'll be off your paws for a little while. I assume Petalheart can take over Skypaw's training?" Her tone was questioning as she glanced at Russetsky.

The ThunderClan deputy nodded. "Is that alright with you, Petalheart?"

The snowy warrior nodded as she worked on fixing the hole. "Alright, that's settled. Skypaw will train with Petalheart and Rainpaw until Hazelflower is healed."

Rainpaw looked excitedly at her sister. Skypaw gave an excited glance back, but she felt bad for her mentor. She wished that Hazelflower could still train with her, but maybe it would be a nice change to train with someone else for awhile.

"Let's get back to camp," Russetsky meowed. Bramblefrost and Bumblefoot flanked Hazelflower at both sides to support her on their way back to camp. The three of them led the way, followed by Russetsky and Willowleaf behind them.

The rest of the patrol stayed behind to help patch up the hole. As others got to work, Skypaw watched her injured mentor slowly make her way to camp. Guilt continued to nag at her pelt.

She knew she had to approach Willowleaf and somehow convince her to visit her brother at moonhigh. That would not be easy, but it would have to be done, she had an agreement with Darkface.

Sighing, Skypaw decided her best option was to bury herself in her work. As her Clanmates indulged in subtle conversation, Skypaw's thoughts ate away at her.

No cliffhanger today y'all!

It almost feels weird. I didn't know how to end this chapter without one, so I just kind of awkwardly cut it off. Sorry!

What do you think Darkface will say at their meeting? Do you think Willowleaf will actually go?

I actually wrote this chapter yesterday, right after I wrote Chapter 5. I'm on a roll. I'm about to go write Chapter 7, so technically I wrote three chapters in one day. It's like it's 2014 all over again, LOL.

Once again, thanks for all your kind messages! Please let me know about the trivia book. As of right now, no one seemed to acknowledge it in the last chapter. I don't know if that means no one wanted it, or if that means no one reads my author's notes. Am I talking to myself? Is anyone reading this? If you are, comment "Darkface is a little loser face."

Sorry Darkface.

Written 08/25/16

Chapter 7

Skypaw padded into camp, Rainpaw on her tail. The patrol had finished patching up the ditch. As a team, they had weaved sticks and leaves together and placed it over the gaping hole. It wasn't much, but if a cat felt it under their paws, they would have enough time to get off before the whole thing came crashing down.

Skypaw's first move after padding into camp was to head to the medicine den. She wanted to visit with Hazelflower. Not only did she feel bad for not being there for her mentor during her time of need, but Hazelflower had done the same when Skypaw had fallen out of the Sky Oak. She prayed that Willowleaf would allow it. Hazelflower had only been able to visit with her because she was too distracted with the birth of Featherfur's kits to kick her out.

Skypaw thought about her friend's kits for a moment. It was only a moon until they would become apprentices, and that gave Skypaw relief. For awhile her and her littermates had been the youngest in the Clan, meaning that even after they became warriors, they would be forced to continue their apprentice duties until other kits became apprentices. Skypaw absolutely adored Featherfur's kits though, they were so full of energy and so eager to learn. She had gotten to know them on her spare time, and it made her proud to think how good members of the Clan they would be when they grew up.

Although she wanted to visit Hazelflower, there was another reason she was being driven to the medicine den. She somehow had to convince Willowleaf to meet Darkface at the Gathering island that night. Skypaw knew that Willowleaf would most likely say no, and with good reason. Willowleaf definitely wasn't fond of her brother, and she wasn't fond of going out of camp at night against orders.

Ducking into the medicine den, she saw Hazelflower dozing in a nest. Her shoulder was slathered with herbs, and her fur was messy from the whole ordeal. Skypaw made a mental reminder for herself to help her friend groom it later.

Since her mentor was asleep, Skypaw decided this was the best time to go talk to Willowleaf. She spotted the medicine cat's tail peeking out from her storage area that was hidden by vines and lichen. Approaching carefully, she ducked inside.

"Willowleaf?" Her voice was nervous and quiet. Willowleaf turned around to face her, obviously irritated from being interrupted of her herb sorting.

"What is it, Skypaw?"

"I need to talk to you," She meowed, her voice still quiet. "It's important."

Willowleaf's head tilted to the side slightly, and Skypaw could tell that the medicine cat was trying to determine what subject Skypaw's news was. Nodding slightly, she sat down, wrapping her tail around her paws. "Continue."

"Remember when Russetsky told the rescue patrol to split up and look for sticks?" She asked, already dreading the discussion that had barely started. Once again, Willowleaf nodded.

"I was on my way to the Sky Oak to search for one, and I ran into Darkface."

Willowleaf's gaze hardened and her tail began to lash. She got up and glanced through the vines at the slumbering Hazelflower, looking to see if the injured warrior was paying attention. Willowleaf sighed before muttering, "Will he ever leave me alone?"

"Not yet," Skypaw responded. "He said he had important information and he needed to speak to us. Both of us."

Willowleaf's tail continued to lash back and forth. "Skypaw, please tell me you didn't talk to him about it in the middle of ThunderClan territory!"

"I didn't!" The tabby apprentice exclaimed defensively. "I told him that we were busy because of Hazelflower's injury, but he asked if we could meet him at the Gathering island at moonhigh - "

Skypaw didn't even have enough time to finish her sentence before Willowleaf interrupted her with a hiss. "Absolutely not!" The medicine cat exclaimed, her tail bushed. "How absurd! Does he think we have nothing better to do than go meet dead cats at the Gathering island? I know it's been awhile since he's been a Clan cat, but still!"

Skypaw's stomach dropped. Willowleaf's response was expected, she had always known that the tortoiseshell she-cat would never agree to such a thing. But Skypaw had already told Darkface they would attend, they had to go! Her gut told her there was needed information in the Dark Forest warrior's grasp that they needed to know!

"Willowleaf, he might have news about the prophecy - "

"No he wouldn't! He's a Dark Forest warrior, not a StarClan cat. Prophecies are between StarClan and the Clans, he would have nothing that's of value to us."

"He knew of the prophecy last time and neither of us told him!" Skypaw protested. She was determined to convince Willowleaf that this was a meeting worth going to.

"From spying on ThunderClan, Skypaw!" Willowleaf stated as if Skypaw was stupid. Feeling anger growing inside of her, Skypaw lashed her tail.

"You don't know that!" She retorted. "Willowleaf, he came into ThunderClan territory in broad daylight to try to talk to us. This is important!"

"He roams Clan territories all the time, he even said so." Willowleaf's voice was stern. "We are not going to meet him, Skypaw. That's final. Not me, not you, not anybody. Understood?"

Skypaw stared at her medicine cat for a few moments before nodding. It was impossible to win an argument against Willowleaf, she had known that coming in here. "I understand."

Willowleaf nodded, pleased. Turning back to her herbs, she

continued her sorting. Skypaw, knowing she was dismissed, ducked out of the storage rock and glanced at the still sleeping Hazelflower before making her way into the clearing.

The sun was beginning to go down. The rescue had taken all day, even though it felt like only a few moments had passed. Camp activity was starting to slow down. Featherfur had herded her kits into the nursery for the night, Appleleaf had retreated to his den, apprentices were finishing up their evening meals, and warriors were retiring to their nests.

There were only a few cats out in the clearing. Bumblefoot took his place at the gorse tunnel, and Skypaw figured that he was assigned guard duty for the night. Firesoul and Flarecloud were having a discussion near the Warriors' den. Flowermoon was eating away at a scrawny vole.

Skypaw studied the plump queen for a few moments. The whole Clan knew that her kits were going to come any day now, and it definitely showed. Her belly was huge, to say the least, and Willowleaf thought there had to be at least five kits in there. The Clan was nervous for the queen, for the bigger the litter, the higher the risk of complications. Featherfur had barely pulled through with four kits.

The sun had gone down, and Skypaw had decided to retire to her nest for the night. Ducking inside the apprentices' den, she curled up in her usual nest next to Rainpaw, and closed her eyes.

~*~

Skypaw tossed and turned. Sleep refused to come for her, and all she was able to do was watch the moonlight begin to seep into the den. Her paws itched to be running through the territory to meet Darkface.

She figured the ghostly warrior was already at the Gathering island, waiting for her and Willowleaf in the clearing. She hoped that he wouldn't get angry when they didn't show. Regret flooded her emotions. This was going to be a disaster from the start!

But it didn't have to be!

Skypaw was still beyond angry with the ThunderClan medicine cat. Darkface was her littermate, so what? He had done bad things in his life, but so has every cat. Her gut told her that he had legitimate information. She could tell by the way he acted in the forest.

Thinking quickly, Skypaw could see the moon high in the sky through the holes in the den wall. It was just about moonhigh. If she left now and sprinted all the way there, she could make it in time.

Willowleaf had distinctly told her not to go to the meeting, but Willowleaf wasn't her leader or her deputy. Skypaw knew that this would be worth it!

Ducking out of the apprentices' den, she briskly approached the gorse tunnel. Bumblefoot's eyes lit up with interest.

"Going late night hunting?" He asked, his head tilted slightly.

"Yeah," Skypaw meowed, thinking that was a good enough excuse. "I heard a bird in the trees. I think I can catch it. It's at least worth a shot, since we have so many mouths to feed."

Bumblefoot nodded in agreement. "Sunstar did say he wanted any prey seen or heard caught," He meowed. "Good luck!"

Skypaw gave her thanks as she ducked through the gorse tunnel. Immediately turning to the direction of the lake, she ran as quickly and quietly as her paws would take her.

Aw Skypaw, why you do dis?

What do you think Darkface's information is? Do you think it's worth the risk of running away from camp at night?

Will Willowleaf find out?

This is the third chapter I've written today. It's currently 1:38am, and I literally can't stop writing. I don't know if this is how it is for anyone else, but when I have an urge to write, I

literally can't stop.

I find it so sad when I look through profiles on here and see that their owners have abandoned them. I knew so many good friends on here (I still do, don't get me wrong), but it still makes me upset when I see that people no longer have an interest in Warriors. It will happen to all of us someday, but it's still so depressing when we lose interest in things that we were once so passionate about. As humans, we're bound to grow and change, but still.

Because of this, I want to dedicate this chapter to my dear friend Holly (@Hollyleaf_). She has supported me from the very beginning. She is such a kind and helpful person, who encourages everyone and anyone. We hadn't talked in awhile due to my inactivity (as well as hers, I later found out) and I saw on her profile that she decided to leave her account because she just wasn't interested in Warriors anymore. I'm really, really upset to see her go, and I really wish that I could have spoken with her before it was too late. But here's to the one who has been nothing but help for two years, even though she will not see it.

We miss you, Holly!

Chapter 8

Before long, Skypaw made it to the tree bridge. Jumping up onto it, her claws dug into the bark to keep her steady as she made her way across.

Thankfully, Darkface was waiting in the clearing. Skypaw padded up to him, out of breath.

"Where's Willowleaf?" Darkface asked, glancing behind Skypaw to look for the ThunderClan medicine cat.

"She wouldn't come," She admitted, panting. "I tried to get her to, but she wouldn't."

Disappointment shone in the deceased cat's amber eyes. "Oh," He meowed quietly. "That's alright, I guess. I knew she wouldn't anyway, but it was worth a shot."

Skypaw felt a pang of sympathy for the ghostly cat. It appeared that he was looking forward to seeing his littermate. This strengthened Skypaw's anger at Willowleaf, but she pushed it aside.

"So, what did you need to discuss?" Skypaw asked, sitting down. Wrapping her tail neatly around her paws, she looked at the Dark Forest cat expectantly.

"So, as you know, Dapplestar died a few moons back," He began. Skypaw nodded. She had witnessed the evil cat die in ThunderClan's camp with her own eyes. She shivered slightly, for the whole thing still made her feel uneasy, especially after Sandstar's warning. "She finally found her way into the Dark Forest not too long ago."

Skypaw stared at Darkface. What did he mean? Hadn't Dapplestar been in the Dark Forest since her death?

Sensing her confusion, Darkface quickly meowed, "Once a cat is turned away by StarClan, they have to find the Dark Forest on their own. The Dark Forest, similar to StarClan, doesn't just accept any cat they meet. We have standards too," He explained. Skypaw wasn't aware of this. She figured that if you didn't end up in StarClan, you ended up in the Dark Forest. Just like if prey didn't make it into the fresh kill pile, it ended up in the dirtplace.

"What happens if a cat doesn't make their way to the Dark Forest?" She asked, curiosity thick in her voice.

"Their spirit is lost forever," Darkface continued. "Bloodstar figures that if a cat isn't smart enough to find their way to us, they're not smart enough to fight with us. Simple as that."

Bloodstar? Who is that?

"Anyway," Darkface continued before Skypaw could ask any more questions. "Dapplestar has arrived. Sunstar and the rest of the Dark Forest have been waiting on her arrival to contribute to the force ever since the news of her death arrived."

Skypaw simply stared at the ghostly cat, baffled. She didn't understand any of this! Who was Bloodstar? What was the force? Dapplestar being denied by StarClan didn't surprise her one bit, but she couldn't say the same about this other information.

Darkface sensed her confusion and sighed. "This is why Willowleaf needed to come," He muttered, before getting up.

"Where are you going?" Skypaw asked, talking quickly, "I just didn't know about all of this new information before!"

"Willowleaf knew," He responded, "I don't have all night to talk to a foolish apprentice. It will take too long to explain."

Foolish! Skypaw hissed in her thoughts. *Not every cat has a background in the Dark Forest to gain their knowledge from!*

"I am not foolish!" Skypaw retorted. "If I rwas foolish, I doubt that I would be the sky in the prophecy!" The emotion in the apprentice's voice changed from annoyance to pleading within seconds. "Please

tell me. I risked a lot to meet you here, and I would hate for it to be for nothing."

Darkface glanced at her. His eyes softened, as if he realized that the ThunderClan apprentice was right. "Fine," He meowed. "Basically, the prophecy goes a lot further than ThunderClan. A raging war is on its way between StarClan and the Dark Forest. Since Sunstar is the leader of ThunderClan, he has a lot more power that he can contribute to the Dark Forest's strength,"

Skypaw's eyes stretched wide, but she quickly dropped any visible emotion she had. She didn't want to appear like a frightened kit, but rather a strong warrior!

"Sunstar is the Dark Forest's outlet into ThunderClan," He explained, "Dapplestar was the outlet to ShadowClan. Even though Dapplestar is dead, she still gives a lot of strength to the Dark Forest, since they now have a loyal warrior at their side at all times."

Skypaw thought about the battle Dapplestar had died in. She had gotten a glimpse of the former ShadowClan leader's memories, most of which were filled with suffering and pain. For awhile, Skypaw had sympathy for her grandmother, but that had completely vanished now. Despite her rough past, she was contributing to the death of StarClan, which was more than enough for hatred to brew within Skypaw.

Skypaw wondered if Moonstar, the new ShadowClan leader, was also apart of the Dark Forest's regime. She did recall how Sunstar and the, at the time, ShadowClan deputy seemed to battle it out on the Highrock. The battle between them seemed phony, but Skypaw didn't want to place blame without evidence.

"You are the cat that will dismantle ThunderClan's ties to the Dark Forest," He explained. Skypaw's eyes widened.

If she was to save ThunderClan, does this mean there were cats in the other three Clans that would save their own Clans?

Suddenly, Skypaw didn't feel so lonely anymore. *This means there should be three other cats who know exactly how I feel!*

"Tell Willowleaf this information," Darkface meowed, once again standing up. Skypaw could tell the ghostly warrior was getting ready to leave by the way his pelt began to fade once more. "She will understand it better. She can also warn StarClan."

"No," Skypaw protested, also rising to her paws. She tried her best to not feel intimidated, but Darkface was nearly twice her size. His gaze looked down at her.

"You have to, Skypaw," He meowed, his voice stern. "This information is worthless if it doesn't reach StarClan. Willowleaf is the only trusted one who can reach them."

"I can't tell Willowleaf I was here," Skypaw admitted. "She ordered me not to go. If I tell her she'll have my tail."

"You have to!" Darkface's voice raised, and Skypaw flinched at the sudden volume. "She needs to know. Don't tell me I wasted my time here, Skypaw." His meow was threatening.

Skypaw nodded slowly. Her paws itched to leave, but she stood where she was. She agreed to telling the ThunderClan medicine cat, even though she had no idea how she would manage to do that.

A sudden realization occurred to Skypaw. "Wait, if you're a Dark Forest cat, why are you helping us?"

Darkface's expression softened. "I may have killed my mother," He meowed quietly. "but I had done it for the safety of my Clan. It isn't my fault that nobody believed me."

Staring blankly at him, Skypaw's mind buzzed with questions. *Willowleaf's mother was a threat? What had she done? Does this mean Darkface wasn't evil, after all?*

"Oh," She responded awkwardly, not knowing what else to say. "Thank you, then,"

Darkface flicked his tail in acknowledgment before fading away completely. Skypaw stood there, now alone. She was just about to turn around and make her way back to camp, figuring she could still manage to get some sleep before dawn.

However, the ThunderClan apprentice nearly jumped out of her fur when she heard a cat call her name.

"Skypaw!"

Wyd Darkface?

Who do you think is on the island with Skypaw?

What do you think Darkface's information means? Do you think there are actually three other cats who are involved in their own prophecies?

Also, I want to give a shoutout to one of my best friends in the entire world, @xMiscChickx . Tomorrow is her fourteenth birthday! Emma, we've been friends for almost four years now, despite the fact we remain 481 miles apart. Driving to Missouri to meet you last month was one of the best experiences I've ever had, and I can't wait until we get to meet again next year. Thank you for always being there for me through thick and thin. I love you, wifey. <3 Everyone, please leave Emma a birthday wish in the comments!

(that's just an inside joke, we obviously aren't actually married, LOL. Felt like I had to clear that up because there would be that ONE PERSON that would think we were).

Written on 08/26/16.

Chapter 9

Skypaw whipped around, her tail bushed and her fur spiked. She gazed at the surprise visitor with wide eyes. Realizing who it was, she immediately relaxed, and purrs escaped her throat.

"Hawkspirit!" She meowed, dashing over to him. Touching noses, Hawkspirit's purrs reached her ears.

"What are you doing here?" The ShadowClan medicine cat inquired before his eyes grew wide. "We weren't supposed to meet tonight, were we? I hope I didn't leave you out here waiting alone!"

"No! No, we weren't," Skypaw meowed reassuringly. Hawkspirit immediately looked relieved before curiosity filled his blue eyes. Once again, Skypaw found herself wondering how he managed to change emotions so quickly.

"So, what are you doing here then?" He asked once more.

Pausing for a moment, Skypaw tried to think of a response. Surely she couldn't say she had secretly met the cat behind those amber eyes both of them had seen lurking around. She knew that his response would be similar to Willowleaf's, saying how crazy and wrong it was to meet a Dark Forest warrior, so she didn't want to tell him. She hated keeping secrets from the ShadowClan medicine cat, because he was the one she was able to tell anything she wanted to without judgment, but this simply didn't apply.

Thinking quickly, she meowed, "I - I followed a bird here," She lied. Hawkspirit's ears perked. "ThunderClan is under strict orders to hunt anything we find."

"But...this is no Clan's land," The shadowy cat meowed, confusion evident in his voice. "Hunting here is forbidden."

Skypaw's ears burned hot with embarrassment. *Mousebrain!* She cursed. How could that have slipped her mind? Now she lied about breaking the code when she hadn't done anything!

Well, she hadn't hunted prey on the Gathering island, at least. She hadn't broken the code that way.

"What are you doing here?" The ThunderClan apprentice quickly turned the tables. *I have just as much right to know what he's doing here as he does to know my whereabouts!*

"Sometimes I like to come here," Hawkspirit admitted shyly. "It's like an escape. I don't have to think about ShadowClan when I'm here. I don't have to think of herbs or healing while I'm here, either. It's just a nice place to think." The ShadowClan medicine cat's voice trailed off as he finished speaking. "And it's as close as I can get to you without being yelled at by somebody."

Skypaw's ears warmed again, only this time, her heart fluttered. *Hawkspirit comes to the Gathering island just to think of me?*

Skypaw purred as Hawkspirit's eyes lit up at her response. His throat rumbled with purrs as he gazed into the ThunderClan apprentice's eyes.

"I wasn't expecting to see you here tonight," Hawkspirit continued, "but I'm glad I did."

Skypaw nodded her head, agreeing quickly. She was grateful that they had met so coincidentally as well, for it had been quite a few days since she had last seen him. She hadn't had enough time to realize how much she had missed him during their absence from the Gathering island because of her swarming thoughts about the prophecy.

Skypaw's heart sank when she thought about the prophecy once more. The dreams, the warnings, the meetings with cats from other worlds, the argument with the ThunderClan medicine cat. She wondered how much simpler her life would be if she wasn't the sky. She wouldn't have to worry about any of this, and she wouldn't have to be bothered with the burden of it all.

"Bet I can beat you to the top of the tree!" The ShadowClan medicine cat's playful meow snapped Skypaw from her thoughts as he dashed off towards the big tree. Skypaw let out a meow of surprise, not expecting the sudden challenge. Bounding after him, the ThunderClan apprentice's paws carried her as quickly as they could go.

Snow flew up from Hawkspirit's hind paws, hitting Skypaw directly in the face as she ran closely behind him. Not letting it phase her, she cursed when he bounded up the trunk of the tree that the leaders addressed the Clans at. Although she wasn't far behind him, she knew it would be difficult to pass him while climbing.

Skypaw's own paws gripped strongly to the slippery wood, darting up the trunk of the tree quickly. She was close enough to the tabby cat that she could bite his tail if she so desired. Using the realization as encouragement, she strived to pass Hawkspirit.

She huffed when Hawkspirit sat happily on the RiverClan leader's branch, whose branch was the highest of the four leaders'. His eyes filled with triumph, he gazed down at the scurrying apprentice as she made her way up the last tail length of the trunk.

"Mousedung!" Skypaw muttered, annoyed. "I could have won if you hadn't gotten a head start!"

"Oh, stop making excuses," Hawkspirit's paw cuffed Skypaw's ear playfully as she sat down beside him, curling her tail over her paws. "I didn't start running until I finished speaking."

"So?" Purrs escaped Skypaw's mouth as she bickered with the ShadowClan medicine cat. "I didn't expect it, so you still had an advantage!"

"Aren't warriors *always* supposed to be prepared for surprises?" Hawkspirit responded, clearly amused. Purrs escaped his throat at the non-serious bicker.

Skypaw studied her surroundings. The Gathering island was white with snow, sparkling against the moonlight. The Gathering tree, which was normally green as could be, was also white, its brilliant

leaves missing. Skypaw was amazed at the transformation, since she had never seen the Gathering island in leafbare.

The only sound that could be heard was the rumbling of the two cats' purrs as they combined, creating a perfect harmony. Skypaw turned her head to look at the ShadowClan medicine cat, whose eyes were already staring at her.

Her eyes roamed over Hawkspirit's shadowy gray pelt. It was well groomed, as always. Despite the fact that the tom was a medicine cat, muscles were still visible beneath his fur, putting together a strong, healthy cat. His fur shined in the moonlight that was flooding the clearing. Her eyes moved back up to meet his dark blue ones, which sparkled as she looked into them.

Skypaw couldn't believe the way the ShadowClan medicine cat managed to make her heart pound and her emotions flutter. All her instincts were screaming at her to stop every time she saw his warm and inviting gaze, but no matter what she did, she couldn't. However, no matter what Skypaw told herself, she wouldn't admit that Hawkspirit had a power over her that she didn't understand, because it scared her down to the core.

Right when Skypaw was about to dismiss herself back to her Clan, Hawkspirit said three words that made her thoughts immediately freeze.

"Skypaw, I love you."

ALRIGHT I KNOW THIS IS SHORT BUT WASN'T IT WORTH IT?

NOW IDC WHAT YOU SHIP BUT HAVE FUN ARGUING ABOUT IT IN THE COMMENTS

LET ME GO DROWN IN FEELS AS I WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER AFTER A BREAKUP BYE

SQUEE

when Skypaw has a better love life than you and she's a freakin cat

Chapter 10

Skypaw's blood turned to ice. Her thoughts began to race as she comprehended what the ShadowClan medicine cat had just said.

He loves me? We're in different Clans! He's a ShadowClan cat! I belong to ThunderClan! He's a medicine cat! I'm only an apprentice!

Skypaw stared blankly at Hawkspirit. His eyes were pleading, and Skypaw knew that the ShadowClan medicine cat was waiting for her to repeat those words to him.

Not only was Hawkspirit a ShadowClan cat, he was a medicine cat. He wasn't supposed to choose a mate from his own Clan, let alone from ThunderClan. Skypaw's mind was screaming frantically at her to run, but her heart told her to not move a muscle.

And she listened.

She sat there, despite the fact that the sky was turning pink due to the rising run. Dawn was approaching, and it was approaching fast.

"Skypaw," Hawkspirit's voice was soft and gentle. "I...I know we're from different Clans. I know I'm a medicine cat. Trust me, I know," The shadowy tom's deep blue eyes bore into her own. "and it haunts me everyday. There is not a moment where I don't wish I could be with you, in ThunderClan's camp, a warrior. There isn't a moment where I don't wish we could raise kits together. I would trade anything, even the stars in the sky, to be with you. Please tell me you feel the same."

His words made Skypaw's heart pound a billion beats per minute. His words scared her, but strangely gave her a sense of relief, almost as if she had been waiting her entire life to hear him say them.

Skypaw's mind traveled to the first time she met Hawkspirit in ThunderClan's forest. She was having a discussion with Willowleaf

near the old Thunderpath about the prophecy. It had been right after StarClan had given her the first sign she had ever received from them. Nightflare, ShadowClan's medicine cat, and Hawkspirit came padding through the forest. He had been Hawkpaw then, just a mere apprentice. She remembered how friendly he was the second time she had seen him in the forest, and the way they had sat together at the last Gathering.

She recalled how she always looked forward to their meetings at the Gathering place. She remembered all the sleepless nights she suffered because of their meetings, and how she never regretted a thing in the morning. She remembered all the times she had put her status in the Clan at risk by going to meet him, and how she knew it was worth it every time.

The voices inside her head told her how wrong it was, all of this. They told her once again how he was a ShadowClan medicine cat, and she a ThunderClan apprentice.

Her heart told them she didn't care.

She would become a warrior in less than a moon, anyway. It's not like she had Clan judgment to worry about her choosing a mate so young, because her Clan simply would never know.

It was at that moment Skypaw realized that she had loved Hawkspirit since the first time she saw him. He had left an impact on her from the very beginning, an impact that she would never be able to escape or erase. Her heart had chosen him, this gray ShadowClan cat, as the one for her, she had just never realized it until now.

"I love you too, Hawkspirit," She breathed, their tails intertwining under the dawning light.

THIS IS SHORT, I KNOW, BUT THIS WAS A VERY, VERY IMPORTANT CHAPTER, IN CASE YOU GUYS DIDN'T NOTICE.

YOU GUYS WILL READ THIS TWO DAYS FROM NOW (IT'S CURRENTLY 8/29/16 AT 2:04AM), AND I QUITE FRANKLY HAVE NO IDEA HOW I'M GOING TO KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT

FOR TWO DAYS. BUT I WILL DO IT.

LADIES, MAKE SURE YOU FIND YOURSELVES A HAWKSPIRIT. DON'T SETTLE FOR A SUNSTAR, MK?

AND GENTLEMEN, BE A FREAKIN HAWKSPIRIT, NOT A SUNSTAR, MK?

MK.

THANKS FOR READING. FEEL FREE TO FREAK OUT IN THE COMMENTS BECAUSE, GIRL, SAME.

9/31/16: Hi friends! Sorry that I didn't update yesterday, I had a friend spend the night so I was out and about all day. I had school registration today (insert tears here) but here's Chapter 10! Again, I know it's short, but writing shouldn't be about the quantity, but the quality. Thanks for reading!

Chapter 11

Skypaw had made it back to camp just in time to hear Petalheart call her name. A pang of sadness went through her as she remembered Hazelflower would not be training her for what would most likely be the remainder of her apprenticeship. Brushing it off, she padded up to the white warrior.

Skypaw had stayed with Hawkspirit at the Gathering place until she absolutely had to leave. Her heart fluttered as she thought of him, even though she had just seen him moments before.

Saying goodbye had to be the hardest part of her night. Even though she was left with a buzzing mind from her meeting with Darkface, she pushed it out of her head. She didn't want to think about Clan life at the moment, and she most definitely did not want to talk about the prophecy. This had been the happiest she had been in as long as she could remember. She wasn't going to spoil her joy by thinking about the prophecy that haunted her every other second of the day.

"I'm right here!" She chirped. Petalheart whipped around, surprise evident in her red eyes.

"Were you outside of camp already?" The white she-cat asked, curiosity ringing in her mew.

"Yes," Skypaw responded. She knew that there was no way she could lie about being outside of camp, for several of her Clanmates had witnessed her walk in. However, she was not about to let any cat know where she had been all night, so she coolly responded, "I was trying to hunt. I had heard something in the forest, so I decided to try to catch it."

Petalheart nodded. Skypaw was relieved when her new trainer had believed her lie. "I see you had no luck," She meowed. "Well, at least you got some practice in!"

Skypaw nodded in agreement. Rainpaw ducked out of the apprentice den, her fur neatly groomed. Her eyes lit up as she saw Skypaw and Petalheart waiting for her. It appeared her sister had forgotten about Hazelflower's injury, too.

"Now that we're all here," Petalheart meowed as she eyed the two apprentices. "I think we should take advantage of having Skypaw train with us. We're going to battle train, since you two fighting together will definitely strengthen your skills. It's been quite a few moons since we've last done this."

Skypaw and Rainpaw both nodded, and satisfaction was shown in Petalheart's eyes. Flicking her tail for the apprentices to follow, she ducked out of camp, heading for the training hollow.

Rainpaw glanced at her sister before whispering, "Where were you last night? I woke up and you were gone, and you didn't come back."

"I was hunting," Skypaw whispered back. Her paws pricked with guilt at the thought of lying to her sister, but she had no choice.

"All night?" Rainpaw's ears flicked in disbelief.

"I just couldn't sleep," Skypaw focused her gaze on the training hollow, that was now coming into view.

Rainpaw didn't respond. Skypaw sensed that the gray she-cat didn't believe her, but she brushed it off. There's no way Rainpaw actually knew where Skypaw had been all night, so she had nothing to worry about.

"Alright," Petalheart stopped once they were at their destination. Settling on the sideline, she looked at the two littermates expectantly. "Go!"

~*~

Skypaw trudged into camp, her paws heavy with exhaustion. Petalheart had pushed Skypaw and Rainpaw to their limits. They battle trained the entire day only to return to camp to have Russetsky send her out on the dusk patrol.

Finally have completed all her duties for the day, Skypaw immediately ducked into the apprentices' den, ignoring her stomach growling with hunger. She could eat in the morning. All she wanted to do was sleep the rest of the moon away.

She curled up, her muscles already flooding her body with relief as they were relaxed for the first time in what felt like moons. Her eyes had finally drifted shut, and the ThunderClan apprentice welcomed the darkness that welcomed her when they did.

"Skypaw!"

Skypaw's eyes sprung open as her relief immediately diminished. She had only had her eyes closed for a matter of seconds, who could possibly need her now? All she wanted to do was let her mind wander in her dreams and let her body catch up on must needed rest.

Deep down, she knew her mind would wander over to ShadowClan's territory, and she would do anything to see Hawkspirit. The thought of his smoky gray pelt and his striking blue eyes made her heart pang. Even though she had just seen him the night before, she missed him. He was the only source of happiness in her life currently, especially with Hazelflower's injury and the ever nagging prophecy. She longed to just forget about the prophecy that didn't matter to her. It was supposed to, but it didn't. All it was doing to her was stressing her out and dragging her away from the cat she loved most.

"Skypaw!" Skypaw jerked up as the voice echoed her name once again. She was so tired she had gotten lost in her daydreams. Her paws screamed with protest as she trudged out of the apprentice's den, her eyes scanning the clearing for the source of the disruptive voice.

"Finally!" Willowleaf hurried toward her. The medicine cat's eyes were clouded with an emotion Skypaw couldn't exactly place. Figuring she was just tired, she shook it off. She could figure out the puzzle hidden behind Willowleaf's amber eyes another time.

"What is it?" Skypaw meowed halfheartedly. What could possibly be

so urgent that she had to be driven from her nest?

"Hazelflower would like to see you," Willowleaf meowed before lowering her voice. "Where were you last night?"

"Hunting," Skypaw automatically responded with the lie she had been telling every other cat that had questioned her whereabouts. As if her mind was on autopilot, words continued to spill from her mouth. "I heard prey so I tried to catch some fresh kill for the Clan."

The two she-cats reached the entrance to Willowleaf's den. Immediately after ducking through the lichen curtain, Willowleaf's tail smacked Skypaw on her left ear. Taken by surprise, Skypaw let out an outburst. "Ow!"

"Don't you lie to me, Skypaw," Willowleaf's eyes had turn to amber fire. Suddenly feeling wide awake, Skypaw stepped back. "I'm not!"

"You mean to tell me you were out all night hunting and couldn't manage to catch *anything?"* The medicine cat spat. Her eyes were blazing with anger. Skypaw had definitely made Willowleaf upset before, but never like this. She quickly realized Willowleaf didn't summon her to see her mentor, either. It was just a trick to get her away from the gazes and ears of her Clanmates.

"It's leafbare!" Skypaw meowed, her voice high and squeaky. She suddenly felt like a kit spitting excuses to its mother. She felt small and inferior. "Prey is scarce!"

"You were gone for hours, Skypaw, hours! You're one of the best hunters I know, if you were actually out hunting you would have brought something back."

Skypaw couldn't muster a response. Willowleaf skillfully trapped her in her lie. She didn't understand how, but the ThunderClan medicine cat always seemed to be able to kill cats with kindness. She had intertwined a compliment within her point.

Similarly to the way Hawkspirit's tail intertwined with mine last night!

Knowing she had caught the apprentice like a cat that caught a mouse, Willowleaf sighed angrily. "Are you going to tell me what

you were really up to?"

Deep down, Skypaw had the feeling that Willowleaf already knew where she had been. She didn't know how she would have caught her, she had been so careful. She scented the air, scanned the terrain, watched her back. Willowleaf couldn't have followed her, she had made sure of it!

"I..." The ThunderClan apprentice suddenly felt ashamed. Her little escape from Clan life and from the prophecy had made her feel so confident, so strong. Being with Hawkspirit made her happy, it made her feel loved and feel in love. Why was that so wrong?

Did she not deserve happiness?

"You should be ashamed of yourself, Skypaw. I'm absolutely appalled." Willowleaf's voice trembled with a combination of anger, disappointment and disbelief. "When StarClan told me where you were last night I nearly didn't believe them. I thought, 'there's no way Skypaw would disregard a StarClan warning, she's smarter than that!' Apparently not."

The tortoiseshell she-cat whipped around and stormed into her private den, leaving Skypaw alone to remember the warning StarClan gave her about the spirit of the hawk. She felt like screaming in anger when she heard the words whispered to her in the wind.

"The spirit of the hawk has more than one intention, Skypaw."

That other intention had been love.

Hola mis amigos!

Long time no see!

Sorry for the long wait. School's been very hectic, and I took Driver's Ed, which meant I had to stay 3 hours after school and then do my homework/study when I got home for three weeks.

I'm on break now, so hopefully I'll get lots of writing out for you. This wasn't that good of a chapter, but I did my best. Idk

why Skypaw hasn't figured out by now that you can't hide things from Willowleaf. Like, duh.

Also, I have a question for you all. I have an idea for an original story of my own and I was wondering if you would take some time to read it if I published it. I really want to start working on some original works, so if you could spare some of your time to give me some feedback, please let me know! I know this is a Warriors themed account and I've written for the Warriors community for two years, but I'm going to be sixteen in April and I really want to start working on some other things. Of course, I wouldn't abandon this story. It may have taken me months (ok, a year) to update in the past, but I always come back. :) This is the story that has gotten me the success I've received and I'm forever thankful.

Anyway, please vote, comment, etc.! As always, my DMs are open for roleplays/questions/discussions! Please let me know what you guys think, and THANK YOU for being patient!

-Kaylin

A Few Announcements...

Hi.

Hello.

Now, I know I just updated two hours ago, and technically this stuff should have been in the author's note of Chapter 9, but I was too busy freaking out over Hawksky/Skyspirit because BGARUBGIABRGUAIRBGgiuBGIARBFGA.

You feel me?

Anyway, I have quite a few things I want to discuss, but they're going to be short and sweet. The first thing I want to talk about is the trivia book that a few of you have been asking about, and I want to let you all know that I'm working on it. Hopefully, if all goes well, it should be out next week with the first question posted. I'll discuss prizes and rules inside that book, so I'm just going to hold off on that until then.

Second of all, I got bored last night and made a characters book for fun. Basically, what I did was take a few background characters who we don't know much about (Sandstar, Appleleaf, Bramblefrost, Petalheart, etc) and wrote about them. I put their names (duh), ages, genders, littermates, parents, and a few life events in there. It wasn't until I had finished a few characters that I realized that it may be fun to post it. It's basically like an in depth allegiances! I would also attach a picture of the character as well. I don't know if that's something you guys would actually like to see, but if it is, let me know. I also thought that any characters you would like to know more about could be turned into a Super Edition-like story...but that would not take place until after the Skyfall series has been completed.

I know what you're thinking...

"Kaylin, it took you a year to put out Chapter 2, and another six months to put out Chapter 3, and you think you can handle all these books?"

The Trivia Book is barely anything (it's posting a question and answering comments, it's the simplest thing I've ever done on Wattpad), and the character book also takes just a few minutes to write about a character. So, as of right now, I believe I could handle everything, thank ya very much.

I also want to let you guys know that I start school next Tuesday (NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO so I won't be posting daily like I have been, but most likely weekly. Updates will be slower, but not nonexistent.

Another thing that I want to share with you guys is that I was chosen to become an admin of @-FanClan- ! This account focuses on Warriors magazines, fanfics, games, etc, so I'd really appreciate it if you check it out! I haven't posted anything on the page as of right now, but I'm planning on getting on it sometime within the next week.

I've also been having some people ask me if Skylight will be the last book of the Skyfall series. The answer to that is NO, there will be one more book after Skylight! I've already decided on the name and the details. The Skyfall series will be a trilogy, so there will not be a book after that focusing on Skypaw and her prophecy, because that will have been resolved. However, if you guys want me to pull an Erin Hunter and make another trilogy taking place in ThunderClan but focusing on another character, let me know. Obviously, since we're only 9 chapters into Skylight, it will be a long time before any of this will take place, but I'd thought I'd answer your questions now. :)

The last thing I want to talk about is that SKYLIGHT HAS REACHED 1K VOTES! YAYY! Thank you so much for helping Skylight reach this milestone and thank you so much for all your support! Skyfall has also reached 8.1K votes, so thank you so much for that too! I wouldn't be anywhere without you guys, and I will forever be thankful for all the support you guys have given me! I've been on Wattpad for over two years now, and since day one I have had such

incredible readers who have helped me get to where I am today. Thank you!

That's all! Chapter 10 will be out tomorrow! What will Skypaw's response be to Hawkspirit? What will she do? What will happen?

Warning - Chapter 10 is a short chapter, but it is definitely an important chapter - it determines the fate of the relationship between them. Stay tuned!

Author's Note

HOLY CRAP.

School's been so busy I cannot even.
I've barely checked my notifications, but I have responded to the roleplays and messages in my inbox. I can already see the "UPDATE", "IS SHE DEAD", "WHAT HAPPENED" comments now.

So sorry for the lack of updates guys, it obviously hasn't been intentional! As some of you know, I'm taking AP World History, Honors American Literature, and Spanish 3, which are by far the most demanding classes I've ever had. Please bare with me as I attempt to figure out a way to maintain good grades in all my classes while being able to update.

Exams are this week, so unfortunately, I will not be able to bring an update to you guys this weekend. However, I have a four day weekend coming up because of the end of the quarter and the election, so expect an update then!

Speaking of the election, oh my. God help us.

Even though our choices are limited, with each candidate having their pros and cons, I really hope you guys tuned into the debates and such! It's important to learn about what's going on in our government because someday, this country will be inherited to us when we are adults. And one of us will be a future president, so might as well start now! Politics are important!

Anyway, I just wanted to pop in here really quick to assure you guys that I am not dead (well, not physically) and that I will bring you guys an update next weekend! Thank you all for being patient, I always appreciate it. I'm doing the best I can to meet the demands of life.

See you soon!

-Kaylin

P.S. Happy Halloween!

P.S. #2: Wattpad has done away with the double spacing on mobile and I don't like it. It's irritating.

Author's Note!

Hi.

Hello.

I know some of you are probably going to be upset that this isn't an update, but I'm hoping the majority of you are going to be happy to know that I'm not dead. After all, it's only been like a week since I've updated, which isn't bad - for me at least.

Anyway, I've come to you guys not with an update, but with news!

A few chapters/author's notes ago, I introduced the idea of me publishing an original work for you guys to read here on Wattpad. Originally, I had no idea what I was going to do with the broad idea of writing something original, or how I was even going to approach the daunting task. However, I took my Christmas break (I go back to school on Wednesday, kill me now, please) to tackle that challenge and settle down on what I wanted to write.

I tossed the ideas around with multiple friends and family (and by my family I mean my mom) and I wrote a few chapters of something that I created 100% myself. I know some of you are probably like "ugh, stop being such a drama queen, you write all the time." Well, writing a fanfiction (where the setting, basics, rules, character roles, etc. are all planned out for you) is a lot easier than making everything up yourself. I've always had quite a vivid imagination, but it's a lot harder putting it down onto paper.

So, while I'm not ready to release my original work to Wattpad just yet (going through some tweaking), I'm going to share the description with you guys right now! I'm not certain that this is the permanent outline, as I'm still changing things around, but this is basically the gist of it. I really hope you guys enjoy it and come around to reading it when I finally publish the first chapter!

ROYAL

An original work by Kaylin_WC

Princess Annabelle of the Kingdom of Astana seems to have everything anybody could ever want - a high status, a palace as a home, two healthy parents and a twin sister. With servants and maids at her every beck and call, it appears she would never have to endure any struggle or suffering in a lifetime.

But that simply cannot be.

When it's time to put it in writing on who will succeed the throne when her parents pass on, severe complications arise. With her parents failing to bore a son and without having an older child, the right to royalty becomes a battle of blood - one with consequences no one outside of the royals would dare believe. The sources of strikingly bloodcurdling evil will emerge, all competing for the throne - but who will succeed?

There you have it!

I hope you guys find it pretty interesting. Out of all the people that helped me with their opinions (I say this like I know a lot of people, it was literally only four) I owe the majority of my thanks to my friend Elaina, who I'll tag below after I'm done with everything. Wattpad's tagging is a little glitchy, and really hard to get done correctly, so I'll save it so it doesn't mess everything else up.

I want to make it perfectly clear, that although it would be greatly appreciated, you don't have to read Royal. It would mean a lot to me, but it's understandable. It's not Warriors, which is why we're all here in the first place. This may not be everyone's cup of tea, and that's just how life goes. I just want to make clear that this isn't a fairytale. There's not going to be a Cinderella or a Sleeping Beauty type of story. I don't know exactly how to explain this, but that's a common misconception that's given with royalty type stories. I feel like I've stated this enough, but I'll state it again: I'm going to

continue writing the Skyfall series. I'm not switching stories, just expanding my horizons!

Also, that aside, I've decided to give you guys my Instagram. A lot of people message me (NOT including my roleplays, I'll stay here for that) and since I go on Instagram a lot more than I go on Wattpad, it may be easier for you guys to message me there. If you choose to follow me (which, you should, since my acc is lit and I follow back) I only ask that you don't comment on my posts about my stories, since my classmates follow me and know nothing about this side of me. Not to mention this would be a great way for you guys to get to know me a little better, since I value the relationship with my readers greatly. I think it's really important to keep in touch with my fanbase.

That being said, please ignore fetus pictures of me. The majority of those posts are from eighth grade, there's one from freshman year and I think four from sophomore year (this year). I've debated deleting them, but eh, memories.

Expect a Skylight update sometime this upcoming weekend! Thanks so much, as always, for reading and for supporting my work, fanfic and original alike!

Much love!

-Kaylin

My Instagram: kaylin.scho
Elaina's Wattpad: -Orion_
Elaina's Instagram: silvery.orion

Announcement.

Hi.

I really don't know how to say this so it isn't so blunt, but I have news that I need to share with you all.

I've been pretty absent from Wattpad during the last week (not even responding to messages), but I have a very serious reason for that.

I've been really neglecting sharing it with you, just because the reality of it still fails to sink in. It's just really hard to believe, even after all the events that had followed.

My father passed away last weekend. It was quite a tremendous shock to all of us, it wasn't at all expected. That is all I'm going to really say as far as details go, just because some things people aren't comfortable reading and I'm not comfortable sharing.

I was planning on making this announcement more bittersweet and more heartfelt, but honestly, details are just too painful at this time. I'll probably share more in the future, but right now I'm leaving it short and sweet.

Thank you for your never ending support during these difficult times. I do not know when I will put an update out for you guys but it should not be too long, just please be patient. I don't want my current emotions to have a negative impact on my writing, so please be understanding.

Much love,
Kaylin

PS - I'm two followers away from 1K. Thank you all for your support over these last two and a half years, it's forever appreciated.

Are You Ready For It?

cue dramatic bass drops from Taylor Swift's song

Hi everyone!

I know, it's been a longggg time since I've been active on Wattpad (writing wise). I appreciate everyone being patient during this difficult time, and I also appreciate everyone's kind messages and comments.

That aside, I've been super busy, even without that whole thing. I'm in my junior year of high school now (when I started Wattpad I was in eighth grade, holy moly time flies), and it's super important that I put my grades before anything else, so thank you for your understanding.

I would go into the usual life update thing, but I don't really think anyone cares about anything except for when the next chapter of Skylight will be out (not complaining!) So, I'll just make it really brief for the few that do want to know - I got my driver's license, my first car, turned sixteen, got back together with my boyfriend, got my wisdom teeth out, went to homecoming last weekend, blah blah blah. Just some major events. :)

Since I've finally found a tiny slot of time that can be reserved just for sitting down and writing, I believe the next update of Skylight will be out sometime this weekend, but probably more towards Sunday. Yay! Sunday Funday.

On a more serious note, I'd like to give serious thanks to everyone that has stuck by me since Day 1, and to those that have found me along the way somewhere, but have regardless decided to stick around. Everyday, I still get tons of comments, votes, and messages, and it blows my mind why people still care about my writing and about me when I'm probably *thee worst* person when it comes to updating and keeping everyone on their toes. I've truly been blessed with this amazing opportunity to do what I love and be successful

at it, despite my long absences and unreliability.

Don't get me wrong, I'm sure there are countless people that no longer wait for my updates or have left Wattpad (including some close friends), but I am still crazy grateful for every single read, vote, comment and message that I have ever received. You all have opened a wonderful door of opportunity for me both on Wattpad and abroad (I am planning on putting my online writing success on college applications next year as I try to establish a writing career for myself) and I love every single one of you!

Anyway, I'll just leave that here. I just wanted to thank everybody and give an answer for when to expect a new update (because who doesn't like dramatic suspense, right?) and let everyone who's asked know I'm still here and I'm alright.

This author's note has been really scatterbrained and unorganized, but it's Friday, so what can you really expect?

Thank you for your support guys!

Kaylin

P.S. ARE YOU READY FOR IT!?

Chapter 12

Skypaw laid awake in her nest. Her sisters were in the den with her, but they were sound asleep, leaving Skypaw plenty of peace and quiet to think about the events that had gone down that day. Despite being physically exhausted and hunger stricken, Willowleaf's words rattled her with guilt and crashing self worth.

Skypaw just couldn't bring her mind around it. She had been so happy, felt so liberated, been so optimistic about her future. After all, her apprenticeship was wrapping up, she was going to earn her warrior name sooner rather than later, the cat she realized she loved was ecstatic about her, and she had finally forgotten about the gloom the prophecy shadowed over her life. Willowleaf's disappointment and anger at her had made Skypaw feel like she had just been ran over by a monster on a Thunderpath.

Maybe StarClan wasn't kidding, She thought to herself. *Maybe I can't do this.*

Her feeling of invincibility had been stolen from her, and it felt as if Willowleaf had just ripped it right out from in between her claws. She had the confidence and fierceness of a Clan leader, as Hawkspirit had made her feel as if she ruled the world as they sat up there together on the Leader's Tree. Skypaw felt as if she could take on anything, as long as he was by her side. Now, she felt as tiny and fearful as a lone kit being chased by a fox.

Before long, the pale reds and oranges from the rising sun started to shine through the branches that made up the den. She sighed, knowing that she was going to have a tough day with the lack of sleep she had put herself through, but she had a hard time caring. Her struggles swarmed around her mind like leaves getting caught in the wind during leaf-fall. She failed to catch them in between her paws as they flew above her.

Skypaw rose to her paws, her muscles stiff, her paws pained. She arched her back, stretching, nearly collapsing as she relaxed.

Shadepaw, only a faint black outline in the dull dawn lighting, stirred slightly in her sleep.

Emerging from the apprentices' den, the ThunderClan camp looked vacant at first glance. Cats were huddled closely together in their dens, trying to seek warmth from the harsh leafbare chill. Bumblefoot was guarding the gorse tunnel, although his face was hidden in his pelt. Skypaw felt a pang of pity for the tired young father, as he was already juggling helping to raise his kits and being a productive warrior. To add on to it, he had clearly been guarding the camp all night, as his stature confirmed it.

Besides for Bumblefoot, no other cat was in the clearing. It was only a matter of time until Russetsky emerged from the Warriors' den to call together patrols for the day, but at the moment, every cat except Skypaw seemed to be taking advantage of the time they had to rest.

Or so she thought.

A thick layer of snow covered the clearing, so the little paw prints were almost undetectable to Skypaw. Out of nowhere, a tiny voice, rattling with chattering teeth, reached her ears.

"Skypaw!"

Snapping her head to the side, Skypaw's gaze, looking side to side and then downwards, found little Brackenkit, his light brown pelt disguised with snow.

"Brackenkit!" Skypaw jumped, "What are you doing out here? It's freezing! Does your mother know you're here?" She inquired, even though she knew Featherfur had no idea, for no mother would let their kit wander out in the snow alone before dawn.

"Um," Brackenkit lowered his eyes. "She knows I'm in camp?"

Skypaw glanced at Bumblefoot. The warrior was still in the same position, and she started to wonder if he was frozen that way.

"Brackenkit, what are you doing out here?" Skypaw repeated herself, keeping her voice low in order to keep from alarming their

Clanmates.

"I got bored," Brackenkit mewed, "and I wanted to explore. I want to become an apprentice already! I hate the nursery, I have no other toms to play with, Amberkit's basically crazy - did you know she talks about herbs in her sleep? - and Brightkit is annoying."

"What about Spottedkit?"

"Well, uh," Brackenkit stuttered, "well, she has spots, I guess."

Skypaw chuckled. She truly loved Featherfur's kits, they were all such unique characters. Brightkit, bossy, and as her name suggests, bright, would make a wonderful warrior someday, especially in battle. Skypaw could see the young kit's ambition leading her to the ThunderClan branch at Gatherings someday. Amberkit was crazy about plants and how they worked, and Skypaw knew Willowleaf had her eye on the amber kit to follow in her pawsteps. Brackenkit was wild, he loved absorbing life and learning, which was why he was adventuring out of the nursery. Spottedkit was very shy, but her quietness gave a vibe of politeness to her, something she inherited from her father. She was the epitome of a classy she-cat to be.

The kits were growing up fast. She knew their apprenticeship was scheduled to be inducted at her and her sisters' warrior ceremony. She didn't mind, as she understood the urgency: Skypaw and her littermates had been the only apprentices for moons, and they needed to be replaced as soon as possible. Luckily, the kits were going to be old enough - scheduled exactly on their six moon birthday, planned expertly by Russetsky.

Thankfully, Flowermoon's kits were going to be born in short time, and Willowleaf, although unable to pin point exactly how many kits there were, reported that a large litter was to be expected. ThunderClan rejoiced at the news, as their Clan was finally growing, and the future was looking bright. *Little did they know.*

Thankful for the distraction her friend's kit was giving her, she reluctantly lead him back into the nursery as he stomped his paws in protest. He insisted he was fine, that he could handle being

outside of the nursery for "just a few more minutes, it's almost dawn, anyway!"

By the time Skypaw got the growing kit settled back in his nest and got through Flowermoon's death stares and Featherfur's endless thank-yous, Russetsky was sitting in her spot below the Highledge, barking out orders. Sunstar was sitting up by his den, overlooking the Clan, but still remained in the security of the shadow his den cast over him. He had to of been freezing, but after all, cold blooded creatures always adjust their body temperatures to their environments.

As Skypaw emerged from the nursery, the ThunderClan leader's piercing green eyes followed her. She couldn't help but feel self conscious under his intimidating gaze. She had to keep reminding herself there was no possible way he knew anything about her whereabouts or about the prophecy - Willowleaf only had because of her loyalty to StarClan, which he clearly had none of - but the hairs on her neck still stood up in nervousness.

Now that the welcome distraction Brackenkit provided was gone, Skypaw had the opportunity to let her heart travel over ShadowClan's border. She thought about the medicine cat's strong stature, his glistening coat, his dreamy eyes that held a spirit so fierce only a hawk could possibly possess it. Skypaw felt her paws being torn in different directions: what was more important, her loyalty to ThunderClan and the prophecy, or her own happiness and her only opportunity to love?

"...and Skypaw." Skypaw's head shook quickly as her mother's voice snapped her from her trance. Once again she was thrown into reality and had to deal with the responsibilities that were constantly thrown her way.

Skypaw had begun to feel like she was out of place, constantly keeping secrets from her peers. She was struggling with the secrecy and importance of the prophecy that loomed over her day after day, ever since she had the knowledge to tell the difference between thrush and pigeon. The only thing that gave light to her life was away in ShadowClan's medicine den, and her happiness had to be stored away, their love forbidden.

Skypaw felt like her body was just an empty shell a container, possessing all of her aspirations, worries, struggles, and responsibilities. *That's all it is*, she concluded. *For my spirit intertwines with that of the hawk.*

I UPDATED Y'ALL.

I really hope you all enjoy it, even though it isn't that exciting of a chapter. I needed a filler chapter to go along with what I'm planning. I know, I know, filler chapters suck, but they are sososososo necessary.

Sorry if there are some awkward (grammatical wise) parts in here, as it's been a while since I've written. I also had to refresh myself on the story and what I had last written, and I needed to glance at some notes to try to get the flow going again. So anyway, I apologize if this chapter lowkey kinda sucks, but I did my best. Feel free to leave constructive criticism (please, not hate) in the comments, I'm always trying to improve!

Thanks for reading, voting, and commenting! I hope it was worth the wait (even tho I know it wasn't lol) :)

Kaylin

Chapter 13

The cold snow stung her paws as Skypaw trekked out through ThunderClan's forest with her patrol.

With her was Petalheart and Stormpelt. Russetsky had sent every other able warrior out to hunt, as they were still experiencing scarce prey, which was worrisome with young kits and expectant mothers in the Clan. Every cat was to hunt until sent out on a patrol, or unless mentors needed to train their apprentices. Since the three she-cats were on the brink of their warrior ceremonies, however, Petalheart and Flarecloud had decided that the best training they could receive would be helping their Clan out in a crisis, like actual warriors. Hazelflower had readily agreed from inside of the medicine den, even though she had no influence over the decision. Deep down, Hazelflower knew that, but she just wanted to feel like a mentor while she still could.

Skypaw missed her mentor dearly. Hazelflower not only trained her, but she befriended her. The two she-cats formed a bond that seemed unbreakable. Skypaw hardly had time to visit the black she-cat in the medicine den as she recovered, and guilt racked over her. She really needed to figure out where her priorities lay, but her mind and heart battled within her.

Sniffing the WindClan border, Petalheart remarked, "Stale. It smells as if-" Petalheart dramatically inhaled once more, "they haven't marked their scent line in awhile, actually."

"Really?" Stormpelt's raspy deep voice inquired, "That's bizarre." His gray speckled muzzle dipped down so he could examine the border for himself.

Stormpelt took his sweet time. Petalheart and Skypaw exchanged a glance. Stormpelt was getting up there, he was the eldest warrior of the Clan. It definitely showed, too. The speckles of white around his muzzle were higher in ratio than the dark gray of his pelt, and his fur no longer had the youthful healthy glow of a cat in its prime.

The Clan had their eyes on him to retire to the elder's den, but he held firm in his status in a warrior.

The wheels in Skypaw's head began to turn as she thought about the topic at hand. Thinking about their current situation, she offered up an explanation, trying to act as if she was the warrior she was about to be.

"If our pray is scarce in the forest," Skypaw meowed, speaking up. "WindClan must be suffering big time. Rabbits aren't going to be running around the plains when they're blanketed with snow."

"You're right, Skypaw," Petalheart praised. "It must be hard for them to hunt when their pawprints track their whereabouts. It must give them away."

Stormpelt nodded in agreement. "WindClan hasn't sent a patrol out here for at least a few days," The senior warrior concluded. He was standing oddly, for his balance was shifted to one side. Skypaw thought that his joints must be stiff or in pain because of the harsh weather taking its toll. This only confirmed her thoughts. Appleleaf was bound to finally have an accomplice in the elder's den sooner rather than later. She was relieved, for it must be lonely for him to be all alone in the cold of the elder's den all of the time. It was too chilly for him to comfortably venture out into camp.

"Which means something very bad is happening over there," Petalheart meowed, worry prickling in her mew ever so slightly. Petalheart was kindhearted, she cared for others. But no cat wanted to sound like a sympathizer for another Clan ever since Sunstar booted Willowleaf out for helping ShadowClan cats all those moons ago. No one spoke of it, but no one forgot about it, either. "Cats must be starving if they can't send out their patrols!"

"My question is," Stormpelt chimed in, "is why our patrols never thought to report this to our deputy. Some cat must have noticed."

"To Russetsky," Petalheart nodded, heading off towards camp.

~*~

"No patrols at the WindClan border?" Russetsky asked, surprise evident in her voice.

"Not for at least a few days," Petalheart confirmed.

"How bizarre," Russetsky's light blue eyes were clouded with thought. "Are you sure snow wasn't just washing out their scent markers? It's been coming down pretty heavily recently. Maybe it covered them and gave the impression of stale markers."

Skypaw and Stormpelt exchanged a glance. Russetsky didn't seem to understand the urgency that their patrol was reporting. It was blatantly obvious that WindClan hadn't been there for days, they usually sprayed ThunderClan's outer forest trees, not the snow.

"The tree trunks weren't snow covered," Stormpelt reported in a matter-of-fact tone. "The markers were indeed stale."

Russetsky was silent as she stared at the three cats waiting for her response. Her gaze landed briefly on her daughter before she flicked her tail.

"Very well then," The deputy responded. "I'll let Sunstar know."

Stormpelt and Petalheart nodded in unison before turning around and padding off, for Russetsky had dismissed them. Skypaw was once again alone with her thoughts. She knew the Clan was under strict orders to hunt to provide fresh kill, but she was exhausted. She glanced around her, looking for any of her Clanmates watching her before she ducked into the apprentices' den for a nap.

Skypaw hadn't seen Willowleaf since she had scolded her. She knew the medicine cat was avoiding her, and it made her paws fill with dread. No one seemed to understand Skypaw's position - well, no one that she knew.

Her thoughts drifted back to the meeting with Darkface she had attended. She thought carefully about his words, about how he told her she was only the savior of ThunderClan. She knew that there were three other cats, just like her, residing in the other three Clans. She knew she wasn't alone, but since interaction between

them was forbidden and since the other cats' identities were unknown to her, she still felt as lonely as ever.

Suddenly, a thought occurred to her. If Hawkspirit was the ShadowClan medicine cat, he clearly was the Clan's closest tie to StarClan. Which obviously meant that he would know the prophecy for ShadowClan, and that he knew who the cat StarClan was!

Mousebrain! It should not have taken me this *long to figure it out!*

As suddenly as the thought had come, Skypaw was on her paws, darting out of the apprentices' den. She didn't know how she was going to pull it off, but she needed to see Hawkspirit and she needed to know who the ShadowClan cat was. Surely they'd want to know who she was too, because they must have been feeling as lonely and as helpless as she was.

A few cats turned their heads at Skypaw's burst of energy. Russetsky and Sunstar were at the top of the Highledge, and both of their heads turned to her. They must have been discussing the crisis in WindClan, not that Sunstar actually cared. Appleleaf poked his head out of the medicine den, hearing the rapid crunching of paws running in the snow. Featherfur ushered her kits back inside of the nursery, thinking an emergency might be at hand.

Ignoring all of the stares and curious looks, Skypaw darted through the gorse tunnel, heading towards ShadowClan territory. Glancing up at the sky, she noticed she must have been lost in thought for a long time, realizing that the day was already half way over. Dusk came later than usual, anyway, considering it was leafbare. She had to wait until ShadowClan was asleep, and somehow try to summon her lover out of his den so they could speak.

It was very risky, and Skypaw knew that. However, this was helping her with the prophecy, and she decided StarClan would have to be okay with it. They, after all, were the ones who put her in such a difficult position, so they couldn't blame her for trying to join forces with the other cats whom they had chosen.

Hawkspirit can help me find out who the other cats are, Hope pricked at her paws. *Maybe this can finally start to go somewhere!*

Skypaw scented the air. A ThunderClan patrol was going to intercept her path. It must have been the midday patrol, given what time it was. Slowing down and doing her best to appear normal, she made small talk with Berrypelt, Bramblefrost and Blizzardfur. Her father took the opportunity to catch up with Skypaw, despite Skypaw's urgency to leave and continue on her way.

Bramblefrost invited her to go hunting with him. She desperately wanted to leave, but after thinking about it for a second, she realized there would be nothing she could do at this time of day anyway. She agreed, and her heart warmed slightly at how excited her father was to spend time with her.

~*~

After what had felt like eternity, Skypaw finally escaped her father's grasp and was able to scurry to the ShadowClan border. The hunt with Bramblefrost was successful, they had each caught a squirrel, which he took back to camp. The entire time her thoughts were clouded with her excitement and urgency to get to see Hawkspirit, both to see him in general and to discuss who the other chosen cats were.

Alas, she had made it. Crouched behind a snow-covered bush, she sighed.

All there was left to do now was wait.

I'm really sorry for this chapter, I know it's all over the place and not that long but it's been a hectic day and I really needed to get some things rolling.

I tried to add some more excitement to this chapter, as well as to give the normal sense of Clan life to Skypaw's adventure. I also needed to get some of the prophecy stuff rolling too, as we're now one step closer in the story. It may just be me, since I wrote this chapter at three different points today, but I tried to make it flow and seem as natural as possible. I know there were two time lapses, but I really didn't think I needed to describe an average walk back to camp, and I used the hunting with Bramblefrost to pass the time. Idk, I feel like I'm just

rambling, but it's Sunday and I have homework to do so I'm stressed and yeah.

I hope you guys enjoyed anyway! And since I feel like this chapter lowkey sucks, please please please feel free to leave some constructive criticism in the comments so I can try to make it better through editing. I've edited this like crazy (I actually had an entirely different approach to this chapter all together when I started writing it) and between cutting things out, adding things, rearranging things, changing my mind, etc., this chapter is kinda just out there and all over the place.

Now I know I'm rambling.

Hope you guys enjoy!

P.S. I just edited this author's note like five times and I think I have a problem lol

Chapter 14

Dusk hit. Shadows loomed over the glistening snow as the sun faded away from view. Scenting the air, Skypaw took her time making sure all scents were stale and the forest was silent before carefully trekking over the border.

Realizing sooner rather than later that her paws left a distinct path in the snow behind her, she found a branch from a pine tree to carry in her mouth. Attempting to smooth over the snow, Skypaw hissed in frustration as the pine needles left little scratch marks in place of her paw prints. It wasn't perfect, but it hid her tracks, and that was the goal.

The pine needles that covered the branch poked and scratched the inside of her mouth. She held back a hiss every time the branch shifted in the wind. *Of course ShadowClan has trees as prickly as their claws!*

The wind was strong, and before long snow began to fall again. Cold but determined, Skypaw continued at a steady pace. It was a nuisance to have to smooth out her tracks every five seconds, but for once both her heart and brain agreed that it was worth it.

Before long, Skypaw was nearly in total darkness. The moon cast a light glow that reflected off of the white snow, which helped her see to an extent. It was better than wandering in pitch black, with nothing accompanying her but the sound of her paws crunching in the snow.

Her memory flooded back to when Skypaw followed Willowleaf into ShadowClan's territory after her exile. Her heart throbbed, as she was starting to miss Willowleaf's guiding paw that helped her get through the prophecy. All the cats she cared about seemed to be drifting away from her, which made her more persistent in finding and talking to Hawkspirit. She didn't know what it would take for her to win Willowleaf's trust - or guidance, at least - back, and it was something she desperately wanted. But if she had to, she could

go without it. The prophecy was about her, after all - not Willowleaf.

When she was in ShadowClan's territory the first time, it was newleaf, and the marsh in their territory was what squished under Skypaw's paws. She much preferred the snow, so she was grateful to that extent. She remembered the way the slimy frogs bounced about, and she winced. How could any cat eat something so slippery, so scrawny, and so gross when there were fatty squirrels, mice and birds running around when the weather was warm? There was nothing better than sinking her teeth into a juicy mouse.

ShadowClan's camp came into view. Freezing, she flicked her ears as she strained to hear any activity going on in the camp. Nothing but the sound of faint rustling came to her ears. She figured this was the sound of cats settling in their dens for the night. The chatter of her teeth began to ring in her ears, and she did her best to silent it. She was beyond freezing, as she had been out in the cold for hours upon hours by now. Temperatures dropped dramatically since her hunt with Bramblefrost, and her breath clouded the air in front of her.

Creeping forward a few steps, she listened again. Nothing. As she turned around to smooth out her paw prints with the stick, she was met with the silhouette of a strong cat.

"It is you!" The cat meowed, surprised. Skypaw jumped about ten tail-lengths in the air, her stick flying off into the distance. Her fur stood up in all directions, and her sky blue eyes were wider than the moon. Her claws immediately unsheathed, and her back arched. When her mind was able to process who was in front of her, the hisses caught in her throat turned into purrs.

"Skypaw, what in StarClan's name are you doing here?!" Hawkspirit's shocked and urgent whisper reached her ears. At his paws were some plants that could hardly pass as herbs, but were clearly all that he had in his supply.

"I came to talk to you," Skypaw meowed. She saw that her happiness was reflecting into Hawkspirit's eyes, as he accepted the reality that she was standing right in front of him - despite the fact

they were deep into ShadowClan territory. "I need your help."

"Come with me," He whispered, setting off in the opposite direction.

"What about our paw prints?" Skypaw asked. "They'll give us away!"

"Don't you worry about that," Hawkspirit responded coolly, not turning back around. "You went through enough trouble to get here. Leave that to me. No cat will ever know you were here."

Skypaw sighed with relief, as the cat she trusted most promised her safety. She bounded forward, meeting his stride. His tail flicked hers a few times before they intertwined. It felt as if the stars aligned as their purrs danced in the cold leafbare air.

Hawkspirit led her to a small secluded place a ways from ShadowClan's camp. It was four trees that were grown closely together, to a point where their branches formed a roof over their heads and protected them from the wind. It was like a little cove, and Skypaw looked around in wonder.

"What is this place?" She asked, "It's so cool! It's like a natural den!"

"I just found it looking for herbs one day," Hawkspirit responded, pride beaming in his tone. "It's my own little hang out. *Our* hang out, if you want. It's a lot closer than the Gathering place."

Skypaw purred. She knew she shouldn't agree to meet in Clan territory - especially one that was not her own. She thought they were safer in No-Clan's-Land, where it was easier to make up excuses as to why they were there in case of an emergency. She knew he had the advantage if they were ever caught if they met here, but she trusted in him that he would protect her. He loved her, after all.

"Our place," Skypaw purred, nodding her head. He stared into her eyes for a few moments before breaking the silence.

"So what did you need to talk about so bad?" He wondered out loud, his head tilting slightly to the side. "It must be important if it couldn't have waited until our next meeting. You came all the way

into the heart of ShadowClan's territory, for StarClan's sake! Do you have any idea what would of happened to you if you were caught? Skypaw, they would have held you here, they probably would have started a battle over you, they would have - "

"But they didn't catch me," Skypaw interrupted him. "I made sure they wouldn't. I'm basically a *warrior*, I wouldn't be as foolish as to let anyone catch me." Skypaw's breath still clouded the air in front of her, and her teeth began to chatter once more. Her paws were wet and numb from the snow, and her pelt was soaked from the snow fall.

"I didn't say you'd let anyone catch you on purpose," Hawkspirit responded calmly. "But ShadowClan warriors breathe battle, they're much more attentive to their surroundings and to other cats."

"And ThunderClan isn't?" Skypaw rolled her eyes. "I know how to disguise myself, you know."

"And yet I still found you." Hawkspirit paused. He quickly changed the subject before Skypaw had time to think of a defensive response. "What did you need to talk about?"

"The p-prophecy," Skypaw meowed, stuttering as she shivered. Hawkspirit's eyes quickly turned into two pools of worry. He moved over and sat next to her closely, wrapping his tail around her and resting his chin on her head, doing his best to warm her up. "Darkface t-told me that there were other prophecies in other Clans, w-which means there are other c-cats, just like me."

Hawkspirit froze. Skypaw waited for his response eagerly, but he remained silent.

"S-ShadowClan has a prophecy, and has a chosen cat," Skypaw explained further. "You're the medicine cat. You know who that is. I need to find other cats like me, Hawkspirit. I need to join forces with them."

Hawkspirit sighed. "Skypaw," He meowed gently. "It isn't that plain and simple."

"What do you mean? Of course it is," She meowed, finally starting to warm up by being against his warm, fluffy pelt. "You just need to tell me who it is, that's all. Is it an apprentice? Is it a warrior? Surely it can't be a kit or a deputy."

"Skypaw, it's not that plain and simple," Hawkspirit repeated himself. He tread lightly on his words.

"Why not?" Skypaw turned to face him.

"Because StarClan doesn't want you to know about that yet," Hawkspirit explained carefully. "It's not my place to tell you. They have a plan."

"But can't you see how difficult this is for me?" Skypaw's tone turned pleading. "I *need* to know, Hawkspirit. And you have the power to help me!"

"No, Skypaw, I don't. I have to stay loyal to what they want, it's my job as a medicine cat."

"Well, by that logic, you shouldn't be my mate because of what *they* said!" Skypaw retorted. She didn't understand. Why didn't Hawkspirit want to help her? Why did he choose to be loyal to StarClan now, after he was betraying them by sitting there with her wrapped under his tail?

"Skypaw, you don't understand," Hawkspirit meowed. "This prophecy has been laid out for moons, it's been destined for...for forever! I can't spoil StarClan's plans, you'll find out who it is in due time!"

"Due time is now, Hawkspirit!" Skypaw raised her voice slightly. "Maybe you don't understand because it's not you. You don't know what it's like to have this prophecy looming over you, without your consent, and have it take over every aspect of your life! Willowleaf isn't even talking to me anymore because of this whole thing between you and I. Well, and with the whole Darkface thing. I can't have another medicine cat, especially you, turn on me now. Please, Hawkspirit, I'm pleading with you. Please do this for me."

The two cats sat in silence for several moments. It was agonizing to Skypaw. Finally, the ShadowClan medicine cat sighed, casting a foggy cloud in the hollow from his exhale.

"Alright." He said at last. "Only because I can't stand to see you this way. I'm only doing this because I love you," He turned to look at Skypaw in the eyes to ensure she understood.

She nodded.

"ShadowClan's chosen cat is..."

I still do love cliffhangers man.

I know a lot of you will probably hate me for this one, but it's chill because you gotta do what you gotta do.

A lot of you were talking about how you wanted to see Skyspirit in action, since this is the first time we see Hawkspirit since he confessed his love to Skypaw at the Gathering Place. I was already planning on this chapter anyway, but here you guys go!

Anyway, I have a few things I'd like to discuss really quick here. First and foremost, a lot of you have been asking me if I have a Warriors Animo. I finally made one, and my username is Kaylin_WC, same as Wattpad! I'd love to see some of your guys' work, since I'm more than aware that art comes in multiple forms, not just writing. So I'm glad there's an app dedicated more towards you artsy warriors!

I also want to establish an updating schedule once and for all. I'm planning on doing some major prewriting so you guys never miss an update again. Right now I'm thinking of updating Mondays and Fridays - something to kick off the week and something to end it with. What do you guys think? Comment what days you'd like to see updates (I think I'm going to do two updates a week) and I'll tally up the votes. So, essentially, you guys get to choose!

I'm also up to yet another project here on Wattpad that should

be coming this week. Remember that Skyfall Characters book I talked about awhile ago? I'm finally putting that plan into action. In that book, you'll find shortstories, character details/ fun facts, and even fanart about the Skyfall characters! It's a way to get to know the background characters and the "historical" characters that don't play a big role in the storyline. I thought it'd be a cool idea. What do you guys think?

I know this is a lot to take in at once, but I'm super excited about it. Please leave your thoughts and questions in the comments and I'll be sure to answer them. Thanks for reading and commenting! I hope you guys like the third update in a row. :)

Merry Christmas!

Hi all!

I am back once again with a quick author's note to wish everyone a Merry Christmas tomorrow! I hope everyone has a lot of fun with family and with their gifts - and, if you're Christian, with celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior.

I apologize for the lack of updates, I was in the process if writing the next chapter of Skylight before my computer started malfunctioning (of course, the night before a major project was due). Unfortunately, my mom's friend (who is an IT guy) said it was utterly trash (like me) and it would cost more than it was worth to fix. As you all probably know, I had to wait until Christmastime for a new computer to write my chapters on, so here we are!

However, even though I have my new computer, I'd like to ask everyone to be patient with me as I try to get back into the groove of writing. The one year anniversary of my father's death is next week (boy, does time fly), and it has been hitting me quite hard within the last few days. I will do my best, but I cannot guarantee I will have the pizazz and motivation to write my best work.

Anyway, I just wanted to share that with you all. Thank you for the 2,000th time for being patient and supportive, as always! It does not go unnoticed or under-appreciated! ＜3

Merry Christmas (and Happy New Year!)

Kaylin

-PLEASE READ-

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Hello everyone!

I bet you're all shocked to hear from me. In fact, I'm shocked that I'm here myself. I'm writing this because I feel like I owe you all an explanation as to where I've been for the last two years.

If I am being completely honest, I never really thought I'd come back to Wattpad. I don't really have a simple, exact answer for you guys. I attribute it to a combination of things - outgrowing Warriors, being busy, getting disenchanted with writing all together, so on and so forth. In reality, I just got older and my interests changed, and I evolved as a person.

It was just by chance that I stumbled across my Wattpad account today. I still have the app on my phone, but I had it tucked away in a folder that I don't really visit much. I was hanging out with a friend (who also enjoys writing), and she happened to ask about some story ideas I've had in the past. Naturally, I remembered all of the book ideas I had stored away in my Wattpad drafts, so I opened the app to show her some of the story aspirations I had that I never followed through with, or hadn't bothered to publish onto my account.

I was absolutely taken aback and blown away at what I found on my Wattpad page. After two years of inactivity, I had over 6,000 notifications, over a hundred messages, and recent postings on my Conversations Board. After *two years!* You guys, I was expecting this account to be a ghost town. I was completely sure that everyone had moved on and had abandoned the story that was once like my baby. Never in a million years would I have guessed that I would find people still begging me to come back, complimenting my stories, and longing for a conclusion to the Skyfall series. In all seriousness, I didn't realize that people still read Warriors and still cared about it. I thought that all the Warriors role-plays and stories

I read (and obviously wrote) would be forever tucked away in my memories, as a chapter of my life that was closed and to never be reopened, no matter how much I subconsciously longed for it.

I know what you're thinking - "Kaylin, if you longed for the Warriors community you used to be apart of, why didn't you stick around?" Well, when I became inactive, I was kind of over the whole thing. I longed for it more the longer I was away, it was a gradual thing. At first, I got distracted by school and by my friends, and by pursuing other hobbies (turns out I'm a huge history geek). I explored photography, I practiced art, and studied American history on my free time. Don't get me wrong, being a writer was always apart of my identity (I'm studying Professional Writing in college this upcoming fall), but it became more of a chore when I had been working my brain all day. I longed for an escape where I didn't really have to think about anything and could let my mind rest. I don't know if that will make sense to you all, but that's the best I could explain it. It felt like Wattpad was becoming a chore, and I was tired of forcing myself to do even more homework. I also felt the pressure mounting - I was getting people who were legitimately angry with me for not updating (and rightfully so). I stopped checking the app because I wanted to avoid the pressure and stress that Wattpad was putting upon me. I'm ashamed to admit that, but that's what happened (*Disclaimer: I'd like to make clear that none of the messages I read today were angry or negative! They were all very sweet and kind messages. I'm referring to the ones I got when I recently became inactive - it was easier for me to avoid seeing people angry and disappointed in me for not doing something I needed a break from. I felt intense amounts of guilt, and it severed my relationship both with Warriors and Wattpad.*) Once I reached a point where coming back and writing again was feasible, my self confidence had plummeted. I had left you guys waiting for so long that I felt nothing I could write would be good enough, and that I'd end up just being a massive disappointment. That stifled any excitement or desire for me to write.

With that being said, Elaina (I'm sure you all remember her, she was in a number of my author's notes!) and I still discussed Warriors as we played our occasional Minecraft session (yep, still a dork lol). We talked about all our fun times on the servers we role-

played on and owned, and how we wished things could go back to the way they were. We talked about Wattpad, but we both came to the conclusion that everyone had moved on. It didn't ever occur to me to check (because as I said, I would've bet my life that that was the case). So it was purely by chance that I came back to my page today.

I knew I was blessed when I wrote on Wattpad. I knew that my story had been successful. But I never realized the extent to how blessed I truly am until I stumbled across all of the continuous support that people had given me for TWO YEARS! I was absolutely blown away. Nothing can describe how I felt when I scrolled through all the comments and messages written to me (and I even chuckled at the hate comments I came across!).

If anyone noticed, I responded to a message on my message board just an hour after I had opened the app. The message described how they believed I was never coming back and that Wattpad was no longer apart of my life. It was a bittersweet to me - bitter as I realized I had let people down, and sweet due to the compliments given to me within that message. I responded that I will be finishing the Skyfall series, but that I did not know when. And that's the truth - I do intend to finish this series as I have always said I will!

I graduated high school four days ago (at the time I'm writing this). That probably comes as a shock to some of you, given my 'About' section on my page has said I am sixteen and barely entering my junior year of high school for two years. I have summer on my hands, a summer that is not plagued with AP English course reading lists and worksheets (the first one in four years!). While I do plan to work over the summer and follow up with some hobby writing (I write articles for a student news page now!), I plan to have a lot more free time than I'm used to. I want to be dedicated to returning, so I'm thinking by the time you're reading this, I'll have reread my own work (for the bazilyionth time), gotten over that cringe-fest, and should have an update written for you all. I do not want to post this until I am prepared for an actual return because I refuse to be a let down and not have anything ready. I'll probably date the time I'm writing this so it's not confusing.

I wonder if any of you all have noticed at this point the few specks

of activity I've done today - I responded to a hate comment (that I laughed at with Elaina, no hard feelings at all!), and I responded to the message I spoke of above. I'm neglecting posting this & any actual "I've Returned" message until, like I said, I'm prepared to return. It's kind of cool writing to the future.

Before I end this letter, I'd like to give my sincerest and biggest thanks to every single one of you. Down to every last reader, every last commenter, every last messenger, *everyone.* I smile at every comment and message I get. I started this account five years ago as a thirteen year old girl who had an obsession with Warrior Cats and who loved to write. I never, ever, *ever* thought that this account or my stories would become as loved and as popular as they are today. I never thought that they would still being read today at all! If you told me back in 2013 that I'd be writing this right now, I would have cried with joy. Not going to lie, I've teared up writing this, both from reminiscing about my time here on Wattpad and realizing just how blessed I am and how beautiful the world (and this community in particular) is. You all have allowed me to explore my biggest passions and I cannot begin to express my sheer and utmost gratitude. You gave me a chance, and I am here to continue my writing. It is the absolute least that you all deserve.

I have a lot to relearn when it comes to Warriors, as everyone knows that it has been awhile! I plan to get started right away. I appreciate everyone who has stuck around patiently and who has bothered to read this. I encourage everyone to support one another's writing, as that's what Warriors do! Together, we can keep this community alive and flourishing.

With love,

Kaylin

*

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

Hello again. I wasn't planning to write anymore on this page, since I wanted that letter above to be heartfelt and sincere. However, after reading 29 chapters of Skyfall and reading some comments, I think

it's a good idea to say a few things before I continue writing Skylight. I would very much appreciate if you read these things and took them to heart as we continue on with Skypaw's journey.

Some things to remember...

1) I began writing Skyfall when I was 13 years old. I know it's super easy to criticize the work you read, especially when it appears to be 'old' or when the author appears to be inactive. I want to make it perfectly clear, before I continue, that I don't expect everyone to like every aspect of my stories, and that I welcome *kind* and *constructive* criticism on all of my work. Seriously, I do - it makes me a better writer! But looking back at the comments towards the beginning of Skyfall, I noticed some very aggressive and hateful comments, calling me stupid (I was actually called a mousebrain, gotta love the Warriors fandom!) for simple things like spelling errors and miscommunications. I fully admit that my work is nowhere near perfect, but I gave it my all, at just thirteen years old. A lot of people took a dump on the prophecy that the series is based around, and while I do admit that it is nowhere near like the beautiful, complex and perplexing prophecies found in the true Warriors books, it is no excuse for genuine hate (not to be confused with constructive criticism). While even I cringed while reading it, and fully admit it could have been better, I tried my best. I truly did. In fact, there are multiple areas of this series that I would have gone back and done differently, but that's life, and I just have to work with what I have. While this paragraph makes it seem I got a ton of hate, I would just like to say that these comments were not terribly high in numbers. It was just occurring enough for me to want to make this comment. If you don't like a fanfic that you read here on Wattpad (or any book in general), just stop reading! Don't try to make someone doubt themselves or their abilities. Just be kind. <3 On the bright side, all of the people accusing the prophecy of being painfully obvious have given me a new goal - to figure out a way to fulfill it that is not expected or obvious. I definitely have my work cut out for me!

2) I've been away from the Warriors fandom for awhile. I'm sure that that's pretty obvious to you all, but I want to say it anyway because like I said above, it's easy to criticize work you read online.

Besides for mine and Elaina's reminiscing of the past, I've been away from Warriors for a long, long time. This means that I've forgotten a lot of essential information. I've forgotten what all the herbs do, I've forgotten all of the ceremonies, I've forgotten aspects of the Warrior Code, the map, etc. I've even forgotten my own characters and some plans I had for this story. While I am researching and re-reading and literally studying all of these things so I can make the story flow smoothly and seem conceptually correct, I am willing to bet I will make mistakes! If you see any errors about any of these technicalities (including typos), please kindly point them out to me. I want to keep the quality of my books high! It's just going to be difficult to get back into the groove, and I'm worried about a rough transition between the last chapter I wrote to the one I am going to write tomorrow. Please, please, please try your hardest to understand before you judge or send rude comments. I know I did this to myself, but I'm trying my best to get back in the know of things.

3) Be nice to each other. Upon glancing over comments I've read, most of them are very nice, positive, and even hilarious (seriously, you guys are really funny). However, there are some that I saw of people asking for clarification on the story, and people were rude answering, calling them names and insulting their intelligence. I just want to remind you all that we are all apart of the same fandom and that everyone gets confused sometimes! And honestly, some of that is on me by the way I chose to write some things. If someone needs help understanding, please just kindly explain it to them, or leave that opportunity to someone else. Don't be mean! I would like my books & my page to remain a welcoming and kind environment for everyone.

I also have some questions I'd like to ask you all on some various things regarding the books! If you wouldn't mind answering in the comments, that'd be extremely helpful!

1) Should I delete all stand-alone Author's Notes out of Skylight? I noticed that there are about 3-4 of them that are not written in actual chapters, but are their own parts. It seemed cluttered to me, and I haven't read them, but I'm sure they're just me trying to explain various absences. Should I keep them or remove them?

2) This sounds silly, but should I update my profile picture? This is the profile picture I've had since I started the account (seriously, I've never changed it). While I'm not particularly a fan of it anymore and find it doesn't match very well, I'm not sure if I should change my profile picture just because it's always been there and that it's linked to my account's recognition by now. What do you guys think, keep or update?

3) Are you an artist? I've been thinking of adding photos to each chapter of the series in the upcoming future for fan-art! Not only do I think it would make the book look polished and really beautiful, I think it'd be a great way to give back to you guys, by giving you all some recognition for your art and for your abilities! If you're interested, let me know. I think it'd be really cool to work together!

I think that's all for now. Once again, I appreciate every kind comment I receive! Some people have noticed my recent activity, and it's made me smile so much at how positive it has been received. I love you all. Please forgive me for not answering everyone who's noticed, I'm trying to keep this on the down low until I can release this to avoid being redundant in my responses.

Sincerely,

Kaylin

Thursday, June 13, 2019

Hi all!

I'm so happy to inform you guys that Chapter 15 is completed and Chapter 16 is already underway. I wanted to be sure that I had writing ready before I uploaded this, and I'm so thrilled to say I do!

Now, there's nothing left to do but wait (unless you're me, I have to write lol). Chapter 15 of Skylight will be released tomorrow.

It isn't the most exciting chapter, since I had no choice but to pick up where I left off, but I hope you all enjoy it anyway!

Please be sure to regularly check my Message Board (that is now

called 'Conversations' apparently)! I can't remember if my Message Board postings show up in News Feed or not, but I plan to be posting more updates there as to when I plan to release chapters, answers to questions, etc. I want to say that while I have purposefully not responded to the DMs or Message Board postings I've gotten, I have read many of them and appreciate them all! I'm sure I'll respond to them soon, I just wanted to keep things on the ~down low~ as I said previously.

Also, depending on how long it's been since you've read Skylight, you may want to consider reading Skyfall over again, or at least Skylight (or just the previous chapter). It's been a long time for some of you and I don't want anyone to be confused when the next chapter is released tomorrow. I managed to read it in 2 days on and off, so if you're dedicated enough, you could get it done by tomorrow!

Thank you for being sooooo incredibly patient. I don't deserve it.

See you soon!

Kaylin

Chapter 15

"Littlepaw."

Skypaw stared back at Hawkspirit in shock. Littlepaw? The small apprentice that looked identical to her? How could that be?

The last time Skypaw had seen Littlepaw was in the first battle between ThunderClan and ShadowClan that she had participated in, all those moons ago. The two she-cats had fought against each other, and Skypaw had made the decision to let her go, for a reason she could not place. She didn't know why that compassion had washed over her in that moment, but now it made perfect sense. Littlepaw was a chosen cat, just like she was!

"L-Littlepaw?" Skypaw stuttered a response, feeling pressure from Hawkspirit's waiting gaze. Her mind was being consumed in flashbacks to that bloody day, as that was the only time she remembered seeing Littlepaw. He nodded affirmatively.

"Yes," He meowed, "I really should not have told you that. You have to promise not to tell *anyone,* Skypaw. I shouldn't have meddled in StarClan's plans."

A wave of guilt washed over her. She was right, Hawkspirit had overstepped his boundaries as a medicine cat. However, she needed to know who else knew exactly what she was going through. The prophecy and all its responsibilities were hanging over her, putting a weight on her shoulders that no other cat could understand. She used to find comfort in talking to Willowleaf, but it was clear that she had dwindled any elements of friendship between them. Willowleaf didn't even know she had gone and met Darkface, so if she found that out, surely Willowleaf would lose all faith in her - more so than she already had.

Besides, now that Skypaw knew that Littlepaw was ShadowClan's chosen cat, they could join forces and maneuver through their prophecies together. Two brains were better than one, right? It

would help them both!

Skypaw began to get excited at that prospect. *Imagine all the things we could do!* She thought. She was just about to open her mouth and allow all of the possibilities roll off of her tongue when she met Hawkspirit's eyes. She found that they were serious, and even clouded with worry. A second wave of guilt washed over her when she realized she was being selfish. She was only focusing on how this information affected her, even though Hawkspirit risked everything by telling her.

"I'm sorry," Skypaw sighed. She stared down in her paws. "I should not have pushed you to betray StarClan for me. It's just so difficult. I don't understand any of this, and I'm expected to live my life by it. I just would love to be able to talk to someone about it, someone who truly understands."

Skypaw turned her head towards him, and was met with pools of sympathy in his dark blue eyes. Skypaw knew that Hawkspirit felt for her, as that's why he told her Littlepaw's identity in the first place. "I understand Skypaw, and I'm sorry. You don't deserve to have this cloud hanging over you and pouring over your life. I just can't betray my duties like that. If Nightflare found out, she'd have my tail!" Hawkspirit's tone reflected rising panic. "Skypaw, I'm trusting you not to tell anyone about this. StarClan kept it hidden for a reason and-"

"I won't, I promise." Skypaw meowed, intertwining her tail with his. She meant her promise, but was dying to talk to Littlepaw, as so many questions were racing through her mind. *What's ShadowClan's prophecy? How is Littlepaw supposed to save her Clan? Has she told anyone? Does she know about me?*

No matter how bad she wanted to know the answers to all of her questions, she had to bury them deep into her mind. She couldn't betray Hawkspirit. His status as medicine cat depended on it. Her love for him outweighed her want for answers.

Hawkspirit nodded, and relief shone through his eyes. Skypaw rubbed her head against his flank, and the two sat there in silence, bathing in the pale moonlight that shone through the needles of the

snow-dusted pine trees.

~*~

Skypaw padded into camp, the moon still shining high above the canopy of trees. Because of her hunt with Bramblefrost, she had been unable to meet Hawkspirit until dusk had began to wash over the forest. As much as she would have loved to have stayed with Hawkspirit longer, she knew she couldn't. She needed her rest, since she had met Darkface and Hawkspirit at the Gathering Island the night before. Her warrior assessment was coming up, and she could not afford to be off of her game.

Hawkspirit thankfully understood. He had walked her to the ThunderClan border and watched until she safely disappeared into the snow covered bushes of ThunderClan's forest. Skypaw trusted that he would cover their tracks as he said he would to ensure their meeting was kept secret. Meeting on ShadowClan territory made her skin crawl, and she worried about what would happen to her if she had been caught. She knew Hawkspirit would've defended her, but as a medicine cat, there was only so much he could do. She could see him laying there, in the glistening white snow, bloodied and lifeless, having given her defense everything he had.

Skypaw shook her head frantically to clear it. How could she let her mind carry her to that horrific of an image? She had made it safely back to camp, and Hawkspirit would be back in ShadowClan's camp before anyone noticed he was gone. There was no use in scaring herself about an event that did not, and could not, occur any longer.

Flarecloud was guarding the gorse tunnel as Skypaw entered the quiet camp. Flarecloud flicked her tail, seemingly uninterested in Skypaw's whereabouts. She figured that Bramblefrost must have informed Flarecloud of their hunting session, and told her that Skypaw was still out hunting. Relieved that she didn't have to make up an excuse as to where she'd been, she ducked into the apprentices' den, and found her usual place next to Rainpaw's warm flank.

As she closed her eyes to sleep, her mind began to whirl about the information Hawkspirit had given her. She pictured Littlepaw

laying awake in her nest thinking about her prophecy and the prospect of other cats knowing, just like Skypaw was now. It pained Skypaw deeply that she had no way of discussing the information Darkface had given her with Littlepaw. She had no way of getting in contact with her, and the two had never spoken. The extent of their relationship was their claws clashing in battle. Regret washed over her. If only she had known that the cat she was fighting was her biggest prophetical ally at the time of their meeting.

Besides, Skypaw thought, *Hawkspirit would never let me talk to her. It would be too risky for him.*

Naturally, knowing Littlepaw's role in the whole ordeal made Skypaw's mind wander to the ranks of RiverClan and WindClan. She now knew for sure that there were other cats who were chosen by StarClan. Knowing Littlepaw's identity made it so much more real. Who could their chosen cats be?

Her mind drifted back to the last Gathering she had attended. She thought of RiverClan's Mistpaw. Could it be her? Or could it be WindClan's Sootpaw? She had never given any thought to the scrawny WindClan apprentice. They, too, had never spoken, and Skypaw only knew about him through Shadepaw's acquaintanceship with him. Or, was she completely wrong, and the other cats were warriors?

The endless possibilities made her head spin. Names of cats she had never bothered to give a second thought to swarmed around her mind. *They could be anyone.*

The faces of unknown cats stared dauntingly at her as she drifted into sleep.

~*~

"Skypaw!" The familiar call that normally ripped Skypaw out of her restful sleep was altered. With dread, she remembered how Hazelflower was confined to Willowleaf's den, recovering from her sprained shoulder. She missed her friend and mentor dearly. Hazelflower's humor and vigorous training distracted her from what seemed like her 'other life'. Petalheart was a great mentor, but

Skypaw lacked a connection with her. Her mind was still able to wander in her presence, despite Petalheart's attempts to keep her busy.

Upon opening her eyes, she noticed that both of her sisters were already gone. She wondered briefly if Petalheart and Rainpaw had trained just the two of them, but Skypaw didn't care enough to ponder it. After all, Rainpaw was Petalheart's true apprentice. Skypaw had entered Petalheart's training very late in the game, and she knew it was unlikely she would develop the same relationship with her that she had with Hazelflower.

Skypaw exited the apprentices' den and was met with a chilled breeze. She was beginning to resent leafbare. She felt worry ripple throughout the Clan each time a hunting patrol returned with no prey. Leafbare had come so early this time around that the little animals had no opportunity to prepare for snow and cold weather, resulting in plummeting prey populations.

Skypaw remembered back to how Willowleaf declared that StarClan was angry when the Clan emerged from their dens to find the camp an icy wonderland. She had said that right after Skypaw had returned from visiting with Hawkspirit.

Worry panged through her. Could StarClan be punishing the Clans for her and Hawkspirit's relationship? After all, Sandstar had made a point to warn her about Hawkspirit, and then after one of their secret rendezvous, the Clans were plunged into one of the worst leafbares they'd ever seen.

This caused anger to sear through Skypaw. *If StarClan is mad at me, punish me!* She hissed to herself. *Don't punish all of the Clans!*

Skypaw was ripped from her thoughts when her gaze met Petalheart's reddish eyes. Petalheart looked as though she was about to call something else out to her when Willowleaf padded up to the snowy warrior. Skypaw observed Willowleaf ask something of Petalheart, and Petalheart nodded, flicking her tail in Skypaw's direction. Willowleaf turned and padded her way back to the medicine den.

Cocking her head slightly in curiosity, she waited as she saw Petalheart padding up to her.

"Skypaw," Petalheart greeted. "Willowleaf requests that you visit with Hazelflower, since she says she seems a little lonely. I was going to bring you out hunting with Rainpaw and I, but you can just meet us up after you're done."

Petalheart waited expectantly for Skypaw's response. Skypaw was instantaneously filled with guilt, since her poor friend and mentor was bored to death in Willowleaf's den and Skypaw had hardly visited with her. Skypaw nodded to Petalheart, and began making her way to the medicine den.

When she walked under where lichen formerly hung, she was not met with Hazelflower's cheerful greeting. What she saw when she entered the den was a transparent shadowy pelt and Willowleaf's raging amber eyes.

"Skypaw, how could you?"

Since I wrote a whole letter to you all in the update preceding this, I'm not going to say much here. I hope this was a good enough chapter for all of you, and that it was worth the wait. I know this chapter wasn't filled with action and wasn't all that exciting, but I needed to pick up where I left off, and well, here it is. I love you all. If you know anyone who has been waiting for an update, please do me a favor and let them know that it's here. <3

Kaylin

P.S. - Today I told my mom that I had left you all waiting on the ShadowClan cat's identity for two years. She confidently declared that you all should hate me. I agree and thought it would amuse you guys!

Chapter 16

Skypaw stood still, dumbfounded. Her eyes kept switching between Darkface's smug expression and Willowleaf's burning eyes. What had just happened?

Skypaw thought she was just going to visit with Hazelflower. She was prepared for Clan updates, jokes, and friendly gossip, not a ruthless ambush!

It became clear to her that Willowleaf had pulled her from her training just so she could yell at her. Upon glancing at the nest that Hazelflower had been resting in, Skypaw noticed the black she-cat wasn't even there. *She must be out exercising her shoulder*.

Staring back at Darkface, she realized that the Dark Forest warrior had told on her. He had obviously told Willowleaf all about their meeting, and she now knew that Skypaw hadn't listened to her.

Great, She thought to herself. *This is the last thing I need.*

"Well?" Willowleaf snapped, "Are you going to say something?"

"I, um," Skypaw stuttered. She was about to muster a rather pathetic response when Willowleaf continued to speak.

"Skypaw, I explicitly told you not to go meet Darkface," Willowleaf's tone was an interesting one. It was undoubtably overwhelmingly anger, but there was something else. Skypaw realized that there was pain weaved within her words. Willowleaf was no longer just frustrated that Skypaw couldn't just listen to her. She was hurt that she, once again, failed to take her requests seriously. "This isn't any of your business! Darkface's past is-"

"This isn't about Darkface's past!" Skypaw exclaimed. Guilt pricked at her paws when she noticed that Willowleaf was pained at the expense of Skypaw's meeting with Darkface. However, this guilt quickly subsided when Willowleaf made it clear that Skypaw didn't

just not listen to her, but that Willowleaf didn't listen to Skypaw either. Skypaw had tried to tell her that Darkface had valuable information regarding the prophecy, and Willowleaf didn't want to accept that. What was Skypaw supposed to do?

Once again, Skypaw was hit with an isolating feeling. Her desire to speak with Littlepaw nagged at her persistently. Willowleaf just proved to Skypaw that she didn't understand what it was like to be the center of a prophecy. Willowleaf didn't understand that sometimes it was necessary to push the past to the side if it means gaining something that will help the prophecy unfold to their advantage.

"Everything is about his past!" Willowleaf retorted. Skypaw noticed that Darkface flinched at Willowleaf's harsh and dismissive tone. Willowleaf wasn't the only one feeling hurt. Darkface was once again feeling the rejection of his beloved sister.

"Did you not tell her what you said to me?" Skypaw asked the ghostly warrior, pleadingly. She knew that Willowleaf would never believe anything she told her if Darkface didn't confirm that the information she was given was true. *She thinks I'm just some naive apprentice!* Skypaw hissed to herself. *Why am I not worthy of believing?*

"I tried to, but she wouldn't listen after I told her you had met me," Darkface meowed, sympathetically. "Willowleaf, I didn't want to tell only her. I wanted to tell you, but you didn't show up to meet me."

Willowleaf whipped around to face Darkface. Her tail lashed. She stared at her littermate, anger ablaze in her eyes. "Why can't you just let me go?" She wailed. "I don't want anything to do with you, or any of your apologies!"

Darkface stared in silence for a few moments. Skypaw knew that Willowleaf's words had felt like stabbing claws to him. After what seemed like an eternity, he meowed, "I'm trying to help you, Willowleaf. I'm trying to help the Clans."

"And why would you ever do that?" Willowleaf hissed. "You killed our mother. You just finally realized how bad the Dark Forest is and

just want to leave!"

"Are you even going to ask for the information he told me?" Skypaw meowed, accusingly. Willowleaf was only thinking about herself, and not about the vital information that Skypaw knew would change her entire outlook on the prophecy, and perhaps even her littermate. "If you don't want to believe it, then fine," Skypaw stammered. She didn't truly mean that. She knew it was essential for Willowleaf to believe the information Darkface told her, but for right now, her primary goal was to just get Willowleaf to listen. "But at least listen to what it is!"

Willowleaf's head swerved back in Skypaw's direction. Skypaw tried to hold the intimidating medicine cat's gaze, but she wavered and ended up staring at her paws. She knew Willowleaf had authority in the Clan, being ThunderClan's only medicine cat and their only outlet to StarClan, but the ferocity found within those amber eyes was intense. Skypaw couldn't help but wonder why Willowleaf didn't just become a warrior. Any cat facing that glare in battle would be sent running into the trees before Willowleaf could even lay a claw on them.

Willowleaf let out a defeated sigh. It appeared that Skypaw's words had hit her, and that the gravity of the situation was understood. She nodded. "Fine," She declared, sitting down and wrapping her tail around her paws expectantly.

Darkface and Skypaw stared at each other, wondering who should tell the ferocious medicine cat. Finally, figuring Willowleaf would be more dismissive of Darkface, Skypaw switched her gaze to Willowleaf and began filling her in.

"Well," Skypaw began. "This goes beyond ThunderClan's borders. It-"

"I know that," Willowleaf snapped, matter-of-factly. Skypaw realized that since the other Clans' medicine cats knew about *her* prophecy, that Willowleaf must know about all of the other chosen cats. Once again, her mind wandered briefly to Littlepaw's small stature, but she snapped back into focus.

"But what you don't know, is that the Dark Forest is involved."

Darkface meowed, taking over. Upon glancing at the tortoiseshell she-cat, Skypaw could tell based on her wide eyes that her blood had turned to ice upon those words. The expression quickly slipped off of her face, and Willowleaf returned to her high-and-mighty attitude. Skypaw was irritated at the medicine cat's pride, but she had to focus on the conversation at hand. "They have outlets in all of the Clans, and are planning to take over. Sunstar is ThunderClan's outlet."

"Sunstar has been visiting the Dark Forest?" Willowleaf inquired. Her tail lashed once, but then returned to its place wrapped around her paws.

"Yes," Darkface confirmed, his eyes bright now that Willowleaf was listening to him. "He's involved in the plot to take over all of StarClan."

"A-all of StarClan?" Willowleaf exclaimed, on her paws. "They can't do that! There's no possible way-"

"It's happening, Willowleaf," Darkface meowed softly. "That's why I needed you to meet me. We need to warn StarClan so they can prepare for the fight that is coming."

Willowleaf's wide amber eyes stared blankly at Darkface's identical ones. Skypaw's gaze switched between them.

Suddenly, it all became more real. Seeing the fear and the horror in Willowleaf's eyes made the reality of the situation sink in. Skypaw realized for seemingly the first time that the prophecy that surrounded her life was not just about her. The most wicked warriors that the Clans had ever seen were gearing up to take down everything that the Warrior Code stood for.

We're all in danger.

Hope you all enjoyed!

6/21/19: Sorry for the short and relatively uneventful chapter. I promise that things are going to start picking up soon! I believe all of the chapters after this one are nearly double in

length. I've written through Chapter 24 so far and believe me when I say things are going to get more interesting! Please bear with me as I get the story to that point through chapters like these. I may release a bonus chapter tomorrow, for a reason you'll understand if I choose to...stay tuned! Thanks for reading, and please don't forget to vote and drop a comment if you'd like! It truly helps so much!

Chapter 17

Faint, rapid clicking reached Skypaw's ears as she crouched in the chilly snow. Her heart was racing as her eyes narrowed in on the scrawny mouse. It had managed to find an old beech nut, and judging by the clicking noises, it was frozen solid. *Don't miss this, Skypaw,* She thought to herself. *Your warrior ceremony depends on it!*

After Willowleaf dismissed her from her den, Skypaw went to meet up with Petalheart and Rainpaw, as planned. When Skypaw had left, Darkface was still discussing his message with Willowleaf. The ThunderClan medicine cat had realized that she had pulled Skypaw from Petalheart's training for longer than she had told the snowy warrior she would and had dismissed her promptly. When exiting Willowleaf's den, Skypaw felt Darkface's amber eyes burning into her pelt. It made her feel uneasy and she was grateful for Willowleaf's dismissal, even though she would have liked to have heard the rest of the conversation that took place.

Much to Skypaw's surprise, this was no ordinary hunting patrol or training session - this was her warrior assessment! It suddenly made sense to her why Willowleaf had to ask Petalheart for her permission to steal Skypaw from her training. It wasn't training at all.

By the time Skypaw had found Petalheart and Rainpaw in the frosty forest, Rainpaw was running around hectically while happily cheering, "I passed! I passed!". While Skypaw had been discussing Darkface's message, Petalheart had been giving Rainpaw her hunting assessment. Before long, Shadepaw and Flarecloud had found them on their way back to camp. Skypaw couldn't miss the joyful gleam in Shadepaw's green eyes and it was evident that Shadepaw, too, had passed her warrior assessment. Jealously surged through Skypaw. She was the last of her sisters to be deemed ready to become a warrior, and that was if she passed!

Just another time the prophecy got in the way of me being a normal cat.

Also to Skypaw's surprise, Hazelflower was waiting with Petalheart, joyously watching Rainpaw's impromptu celebration. She hadn't been out exercising her sprained shoulder, after all. She had been waiting to assess Skypaw as her final act as her mentor. When Skypaw had realized this, joy surged through her - she adored Hazelflower, and thankfully, she was able to do her final duty as her mentor.

Before her assessment started, Hazelflower was sure to give her a pep talk. "You got this, Skypaw," she meowed, pride gleaming in her hazel eyes. "We've practiced, and you'll be able to catch so much prey, even though it's leafbare! I'm so proud of you, I-"

"Come on, Hazelflower," Petalheart meowed, humorously. "She hasn't passed yet! Let's get ready."

Hazelflower nodded. Looking back at Skypaw, she touched noses with her apprentice. Nodding once again, either to reassure herself or in pride - Skypaw wasn't sure - she leaned on Petalheart slightly as they disappeared into the snowy bracken. Skypaw wasn't sure where they were off to, but she suddenly became painfully aware of not just Hazelflower's eyes on her, but Petalheart's as well. She had no choice, since Hazelflower needed help walking around. She was lucky Willowleaf let her out of the medicine den to assess Skypaw at all.

Now, here she was, narrowing in on one of the smallest mice she had ever seen. Skypaw realized how lucky she was to have found prey so easily, especially during this tough, draining leafbare. The sound of the nibbling on the frozen beech nut had fortunately drawn her to it. She prayed desperately to StarClan as she stretched her front legs forward, beginning to advance towards the mouse. *Please, let me get this.*

The mouse, probably filling its own ears with the sounds of its nibbling, did not sense Skypaw's presence. Creeping forward still, Skypaw advanced at a slow pace, knowing that any quick movements would send snow flying up from her back legs. Peeking out behind a bush, Skypaw stared at the mouse intensely. She knew she had to get this, as there were less opportunities for her to hunt than there would be if she were taking her assessment in newleaf.

As much as she wanted to focus for longer, she knew that with each second she waited, the risk of the mouse taking off increased greatly.

Inhaling, she crept forward a few more steps to the side of the bush. Putting all of her strength in her hind legs, she leapt, stretching her front paws out in front of her. The mouse, still nibbling peacefully, had no idea its death was flying above it in the form of a cat. Skypaw landed perfectly on top of it, her claws pinning it to the ground. Swiftly, she snipped her teeth around its neck, making her first catch a success.

Thank StarClan! She meowed to herself, purring. *I did it!*

Holding the mouse in her mouth, she held her tail up high, knowing she was being watched. She could have sworn she heard a, "Good job, Skypaw!" from Hazelflower, and a following, "Shush!" from Petalheart somewhere in the bushes. She carried the mouse to the side of the pathway and buried it under some snow, preserving it for later. Upon walking away, she kicked the little beechnut that the mouse had been nibbling on off of the path and into the bracken. *Perhaps it'll attract another critter by the time I make my way back.*

Proceeding down the route, Skypaw paused every few moments, both to scent the air and to perk her ears. She was alert for any form of prey she heard. Stress pricked at her paws when she was unable to hear much activity in the forest. Taking a deep breath to calm herself, she continued on her way, making sure her paws were silent against the cold dirt path.

Before long, she heard a flutter from somewhere up in the treetops. Skypaw stopped in her tracks and reluctantly looked above her. Snow fell off of the tree branch from where she assumed the bird was settling in. Skypaw filled with dread when she realized that she would have to climb up a slippery tree to hunt her next catch. In desperation, she scented the air one last time and strained her ears, trying to listen for any other options. Much to her disappointment, the only sounds that reached her ears was the scurrying of the bird above.

She dug her claws expertly into the bark of the tree, gripping

tighter then she normally would. Flashbacks of what happened the last time she tried to hunt a bird from a tree swarmed around her memory. She had plummeted from the Sky Oak and had to spend time in Willowleaf's den. Knowing that spending time in Willowleaf's den now would be a terrible time due to Willowleaf's anger at her, she was sure to dig her claws deep into the trunk of the tree. She also desperately wanted her warrior name, and it helped fuel her fire for caution.

Climbing her way up the tree, she cringed as bits of bark tumbled down the trunk, disturbed by her sharp claws. She perked her ears and fortunately did not hear the frantic fluttering of an alarmed bird above her. She continued on her way, and soon enough, the small body of a blackbird came into view.

It was sitting toward the end of the branch, picking at its feathers. Annoyance surged up in Skypaw when she realized that the branch gradually got thinner as it grew longer. This branch was quite unstable, with both its thinness and the brittleness from leafbare.

Skypaw knew that she couldn't turn back now. She had almost made it all the way up the tree! Skypaw knew that Hazelflower would not hold a retreat against her, but she was not so sure about Petalheart. She could imagine the senior warrior talking sense into Hazelflower as the black she-cat attempted to pass her. *Especially with it being leafbare*, Skypaw hissed to herself. *We need all of the prey we can get! A true warrior would hunt this bird, despite the danger that surrounds it.*

Reaching the branch that the bird rested on, she gently put one paw on its bark. The branch swayed gently under her weight. The bird snapped its head up, assumably listening for any danger. Skypaw made sure to stay perfectly still. The bird, wrongfully deciding that there was no danger around, went back to grooming itself. Relief flooded through her.

Knowing that it was too risky to gradually put her weight onto the branch, as the bird would surely become aware of her, Skypaw decided to leap for the kill. She knew that this was a hit or miss shot, but the alternative was just strictly a miss. Fear pricked within her paws. *What if the branch breaks? What if the bird manages to get*

away? I'd never pass!

Realizing that it was now or never, Skypaw once again gathered her strength in her back legs. Preparing to twist her body as she jumped, she slightly adjusted her form, allowing that transition to be easier. Inhaling sharply, she leaped.

Bark flew off the trunk from where her claws had been resting. The branch shook violently with the power of her take off. The bird screeched in alarm, and opened its wings to take off, but it was too late. Skypaw's mouth clamped around its body, and its screeching stopped instantly - either from death or from surrender, Skypaw was not sure.

However, Skypaw failed to feel the comforting weight from the branch under her waiting paws. It hit Skypaw like a ton of thorns that she was plummeting through the chilly leafbare air.

Refusing to let out a horrified yelp, remembering that she was being assessed, Skypaw frantically searched for something to catch her from her fall. Much to her relief, her claws sank into the branch below the one that she had missed upon her jump, and she was able to pull herself onto its comforting support.

Thank you, StarClan! Skypaw exclaimed in her head. *I surely would've failed if that branch wasn't there to save me!*

Skypaw made sure not to appear alarmed, confused, or even relieved. She wanted to give off the impression that that move was planned, and was not just a happy accident.

Descending quickly down the trunk of the tree, Skypaw felt alleviated as she felt the coldness of the hard ground beneath her paws. Hazelflower exploded from the bushes, nearly scaring Skypaw out of her fur.

"Skypaw!" Hazelflower exclaimed. "That move, it was so great! The bird didn't even see you coming, and you didn't have to worry about breaking the branch and falling!"

Relief flooded through her. She had been successful in playing off

her accident!

Petalheart followed from where Hazelflower had come from out of the bushes. "Very well done, Skypaw."

Skypaw muffled, "Thank you!" through the bird that was still resting in her mouth. She held her tail high in pride.

"I think we've seen enough," Hazelflower meowed conclusively, turning towards Petalheart. "What do you think?"

"I agree," Petalheart nodded. "I only had Rainpaw catch two pieces of prey, too. There just isn't a lot in the forest right now."

"Come on, Skypaw," Hazelflower meowed, pride beaming in her eyes. "Let's go get your mouse and head back to camp."

Skypaw nodded, and began to follow the two older she-cats. She couldn't help but walk with a pep in her step. She had done it! She had finally become a warrior!

Snow began to fall from the sky. Skypaw looked up, imagining her warrior ancestors' shining stars that were surely there, just invisible during the day's sunlight. She felt their presence as she stared up at them, happiness flowing through her veins.

Thank you.

6/22/19: Happy Bonus Chapter! Prepare yourselves for a letter of me emotionally babbling!

I know it seems a bit soon for another upload since I just posted Chapter 16 yesterday, but I felt like this is warranted. Today is my FIVE YEAR anniversary of starting my Wattpad account. Not only does that make me feel elderly, but it also makes me so very nostalgic of the past five years that have literally flown before my eyes.

I started my Wattpad in the summer between sixth and seventh grade. At the time, I had learned of the site because all my friends were obsessed with reading One Direction and 5 Seconds of Summer fan-fictions. Being a fan as well, I decided

to jump on the bandwagon and begin reading some. This was at the height of my Final Dawn Warriors Minecraft server as well (which has since shut down, but I had left years earlier and had co-owned several others afterwards). You guys, when I say I adored roleplaying on that server, I truly mean it. I spent every waking moment online with my Warriors-crazed friends and roleplayed the day away. So imagine my utter excitement when one day I made the connection that I could combine my love of fanfiction and writing with my Warriors obsession!

I made this account that day, and began working on Skyfall shortly after. I worked day in and day out on it - I was either writing, or I was roleplaying on Minecraft. That's what my summer was, and I'm not exaggerating in the slightest (just ask @-Orion_, she lived through every moment with me). That is literally all I did. Being on the computer constantly drove my father absolutely crazy, and I still vividly remember my mother defending me, claiming that I was not only being social with people online, but that I was also strengthening my writing skills. My dad never understood, but I know that now that he is in a place where he can comprehend the internet and what I do on here with clarity, that he is proud of me.

I know it's sad that through 5 years on here I have only managed to complete one full novel so far and only roughly half of another, and I'm not going to sit here and say that my time on Wattpad has been all rainbows and sunshine. While I have prospered immensely on this website, I have shed many tears during my time here. I've watched dear friends vanish from their accounts, never to be seen again. I've wavered in my self-confidence in my writing to the point where I avoided logging on. I've struggled with my mental health as I dealt with life-events that weren't even related to Wattpad, but that happened during these past five years. But I am proud to say that after five years, I am still here, stronger than ever before, with my eyes bright and my arms reaching forward to the future.

I started this account in the middle of middle school, and here

I am, a high school graduate. My college orientation is next week. So much has elapsed during these five years of my life, but yet, it feels like then to now has occurred in the blink of an eye. I've learned so much on Wattpad, ranging from learning new things about who I am to strengthening my skills as a writer. I've met the most wonderful people, read some of the best novels, thrived as a writer, and have gone from thinking I could never do anything with writing in my life to capturing that dream and taking ahold of it - and I owe it all to you. To anyone who is reading this now as a new fan or to my readers who have since left from back in the day, I owe it to you. Quite literally. I just desperately want you all to know that you have done more than give me your votes, follows, and comments. You have fueled my dream to become a writer, have built my confidence from the ground up, and have taught me to learn from my mistakes and turn them into something great (especially now as I try to continue my writing from 5 years ago - oof, there's so much I would change). You all have caused me to add the label of "writer" to my identity, rather than me viewing myself as someone who simply enjoys writing. I know that is silly to say when all I've done on this account is write Warriors fan-fictions, but words cannot explain how beneficial my Wattpad career has been for me. It goes so much deeper than the cats I love writing about. Miles deeper. It goes down to who I am as a person.

While all of my readers equally mean so much to me, I'd like to thank two people in particular. The first being my absolute best friend, Elaina (@-Orion_). She has supported me from the second I started writing. She has kept me up during my darkest moments in life and I could not be more grateful for our friendship. We met 6ish years ago on a Warriors Minecraft server and have been friends ever since. Despite us living 5,000-something miles away from each other, she has always been there for me when I needed her, even when I did not deserve it. Elaina, you are one of the best people I've ever met in my life - from your dark humor, edgy persona, your unwavering loyalty and compassion, and your talents as all a writer, artist, and a musician (go vibraphone!). Our 5 hour FaceTime calls, endless text messages, late night Minecraft

sessions, role-plays from back in the day, and our infamous rants about Warriors and life in general mean the absolute world to me. Thanks for being such a great friend. <3

Secondly, I'd like to thank @StardustWritings. While I know we just recently reconnected after me being gone off of Wattpad for so long, I want you to know that I am soooooo thankful for your endless support. I remember all of the days we spent on Minecraft roleplaying and we share countless memories. I am so appreciative of your endless support of my writing. I don't know what I did to deserve your encouraging and in-depth comments after being gone for so long, but know that they always put a smile on my face. I'm so glad we've been able to reconnect, and congrats for being an admin on WattyWarriors! I'm so proud of how far you've come! <3

This has been the most incredible journey, and I am so thankful that it is far from being over. I am seriously so blessed for all that you have given me. I truly mean it when I cherish every encouraging message, vote, comment, and follow that all of you have sent my way. I only wish that I have done more to return the favor to you all - if I could go back and update consistently for you, I would. If I could make it so I never left Wattpad for any of my absences, I would. But I cannot. All I can do is learn from these experiences, and believe me when I say I have.

Since I'm being nostalgic, I find that it would be fitting to say that what Hannah Montana always told us is indeed true - we always find our way back home.

Kaylin

Chapter 18

Upon arriving back at camp, she was greeted by her two sisters. Before she could even set down her bird, they were bombarding her with the question, "Did you pass?!"

Skypaw nodded affirmatively, her tail waving and held high. Shadepaw and Rainpaw erupted into cries of joy. Russetsky, upon hearing Skypaw's return to camp, padded over to the three littermates after she had spoken to Hazelflower and Petalheart.

"My kits!" She exclaimed, pride and joy beaming from her eyes. "My kits are going to receive their warrior names today! Where has the time gone?"

Upon hearing his mate's exclamation, Bramblefrost's dark pelt emerged from the warriors' den. He, too, looked like he might explode with pride. Skypaw set down her mouse and purred a greeting to her father.

"I cannot believe it," Bramblefrost said as he joined his family. He intertwined his tail with Russetsky's. "It seems like just yesterday I laid eyes on my kits for the first time. I knew I had my paws full between Shadepaw's ambition, Rainpaw's compassion, and Skypaw's curiosity."

Russetsky nodded in agreement, her eyes raking over the three she-cats she had raised. After a moment, she nodded again as if snapping herself out of her memories of her darling kits when they were little. "I'll go inform Sunstar that you all passed your assessments."

Bramblefrost, deciding he would follow Russetsky to Sunstar's den, called out, "I'm proud of you all!" over his shoulder before padding away.

Skypaw took a moment to look at her parents. They padded away closely, side by side, their tails intertwining together. Bramblefrost's

bigger frame cast a slight shadow over Russetsky's shadowy pelt. She noticed her mother leaned against her father, and she admired the point where their fur began to blend together slightly, seemingly morphing the two mates into one.

A pant of sadness tugged at Skypaw's heart. She would never have that with her darling Hawkspirit. The concept of mates being able to walk together in front of everyone, their affection going unnoticed or, when it did catch the attention of bystanders, being adored. Here she was, on arguably the most important day of her life, and Hawkspirit couldn't be there to see her stand in front of her Clan and be declared a warrior by the powers of StarClan.

"I can't believe it!" Rainpaw exclaimed, pulling her from her thoughts. "After all of our hard work, we finally get to become warriors!"

Skypaw nodded in agreement. Shadepaw chimed in with, "I thought the day would never come."

"Well, it finally has," Skypaw meowed, genuine happiness echoing in her voice. "And I couldn't be more excited!"

Skypaw was about to tell her sisters the miraculous recovery she had made during her assessment when a familiar, raspy voice called out her name. "Skypaw!" It meowed. "Did you forget about me?"

Skypaw turned to see no other than Appleleaf. Skypaw erupted into purrs when she saw the pride and delight in the old tom's eyes. He had obviously heard that she had passed her final assessment.

"Of course not," Skypaw responded, warmly. "I was just about to come see you-"

"I know you've been busy, Skypaw," Appleleaf meowed, shrugging it off. "I am very happy for you. It's clear to everyone in the Clan that you have worked hard during your apprenticeship, and that you will make a fine warrior."

"Thank you, Appleleaf," Skypaw meowed, sincerely. "Hopefully now that I won't be cramming in all my training, I can make more time

to visit you in the elders' den." Guilt pricked at her paws. She knew that training wasn't the reason why she hadn't visited her old friend in awhile. It was because she was spending all of her free time with Hawkspirit and trying to unravel the prophecy's complicated message.

"No need to waste your time on an old tom like me," Appleleaf meowed. "I remember what it was like to be an apprentice, and a new warrior. It comes with a lot of responsibility. I'll see you at your ceremony," He meowed, and touched his nose against hers.

"I'll see you," Skypaw meowed as she watched him pad away.

~*~

"Let all cats gather!" Sunstar's deep meow boomed through the camp. Excitement and nervousness pricked through Skypaw as her and her sisters frantically finished grooming themselves in the apprentices' den.

"This is the last time we'll be in here!" Rainpaw squealed. Shadepaw finished brushing the fur down on her flank. Excited squeaks from Featherfur's four kits could be heard from outside of the nursery. Skypaw recalled Russetsky had informed her that Featherfur's kits would be becoming apprentices at the same time that Skypaw and her sisters would become warriors.

Exiting the den, Skypaw was surprised to find that most of the Clan had already found their seats in the clearing. News that her and her littermates had passed their assessments had spread quickly. Glancing over near the nursery, Skypaw saw Flowermoon sitting patiently outside of the den. Next to her was Featherfur and Bumblefoot, desperately trying to keep their kits' fur groomed as they waited to become apprentices.

Brackenkit caught Skypaw's gaze. "Skypaw!" He hollered out a greeting. He almost bolted over to her, but Featherfur caught him by his scruff in her mouth. He squirmed in her mouth and Skypaw saw Bumblefoot giving the striped kit a stern lecture. Brackenkit then stayed still and was set back on the ground. He still stared over at Skypaw, but had given up his passionate pursuit to go over and

see her. She waved her tail at him.

She couldn't believe Featherfur's kits were already becoming apprentices. She remembered so clearly the day that they were born. She had just fallen out of the Sky Oak, and Hazelflower had kept her company in the medicine den. Willowleaf was so preoccupied by Featherfur's difficult birth that she hadn't kicked Hazelflower out of the den as she normally would.

"We have multiple ceremonies to do today," Sunstar meowed. Skypaw cocked her head. Was that annoyance in his voice?

"First, we have four kits who are to become apprentices," He meowed. Brightkit let out an excited squeal, much to Featherfur's embarrassment. Amberkit and Spottedkit shifted excitedly on their paws, but Brackenkit stood still with his head held high, unsurprisingly after Bumblefoot's lecture.

"Brightkit," Sunstar's deep meow rang through the camp. "Please come forward."

Featherfur and Bumblefoot gave their daughter an encouraging glance as she made her way to her leader. Looking up at the fiery tom with her excited eyes, she stared at him, expectantly.

"Brightkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Brightpaw. Your mentor will be Blizzardfur. I hope Blizzardfur will pass down all she knows to you."

Brightpaw's tail was held high. Blizzardfur, also looking proud to be taking on her first apprentice, stepped forward.

"Blizzardfur, you are ready to take on an apprentice. You have received excellent training from Appleleaf, and you have shown yourself to be strong and intelligent. You will be the mentor of Brightpaw, and I expect you to pass on all you know to her."

Featherfur and Bumblefoot were the first to cheer. The rest of the Clan soon followed. Brightpaw and Blizzardfur touched noses in

greeting and found seats in the crowd. Sunstar had a look of irritation when he noticed that he still had to perform three more apprentice ceremonies, and then three warrior ceremonies.

This sent a ripple of anger through Skypaw. This was supposed to be a joyous occasion, and he was looking at it as a chore!

"Spottedkit, come forward," Sunstar demanded. Spottedkit, suddenly suffering from stage fright, stood still in her tracks. Bumblefoot pushed her forward gently with his nose.

Once she reached Sunstar, he continued. Spottedkit delightedly became Spottedpaw, and it was decided that her mentor would be Mousetail. The young warrior excitedly greeted his apprentice. Skypaw was happy for him. *He deserves a distraction from the horrors that haunt him.*

Rainpaw's gaze also excitedly followed Mousetail. Skypaw once again suspected that she was crushing over the brown warrior. She could tell she radiated happiness that he had received his first apprentice.

After Spottedpaw's ceremony, it was Brackenkit's turn. He practically bounced his way to Sunstar. Sunstar flicked his tail in annoyance at the young tom's excitement. Before long, Brackenkit took on his name of Brackenpaw, and Bramblefrost was assigned his mentor. Bramblefrost beamed with pride at taking his first apprentice in what seemed like moons. Since his kits were the only apprentices for a long time, Bramblefrost had taken a break from training. Skypaw could tell her father was excited to be back at it.

Finally, it was time for Amberkit's ceremony. The cream-colored she-cat made her way to Sunstar. A few murmurs of surprise rippled through the Clan when Willowleaf stepped forward, but it didn't shock Skypaw one bit.

"Amberkit has decided to go down the path of becoming a medicine cat," Sunstar meowed blandly. "Amberkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your medicine cat name, you will be known as Amberpaw. Your mentor will be Willowleaf. I hope Willowleaf will

pass down all she knows to you."

Wild cheers went through the Clan. For the people who knew Amberpaw, this was a decision that was long seen coming. Featherfur and Bumblefoot beamed with pride, as their daughter would be the next healer of ThunderClan. Spottedpaw, Brightpaw, and Brackenpaw cheered for their sister, and Skypaw found herself howling for Amberpaw as well. The shy she-cat dipped her head in acknowledgment.

Willowleaf touched noses with her new apprentice with delight. Skypaw could tell that Willowleaf saw promise within Amberpaw, and was satisfied with her choice. Willowleaf had had her eye on the young she-cat during her kit-hood. The two she-cats found their seats in front of the medicine den.

"Moving on," Sunstar meowed, hurriedly. "We are to welcome three new warriors into ThunderClan."

Anxiousness shot through Skypaw. This was the moment she had been waiting for!

The Clan turned their gazes to Skypaw and her sisters. The three of them sat proudly, their heads held high, waiting for their next instructions.

"Shadepaw," Sunstar meowed. "Please come forward."

Shadepaw rose from her seat and traveled down the path in the middle of their Clanmates until she stood face-to-face with the orangey leader. She gazed up at him as he continued to speak.

"I, Sunstar, leader of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice." Skypaw suddenly felt a new wave of disgust with her leader. She knew that he didn't believe in the power and dignity of StarClan's warriors, and here he was, faking it to an unsuspecting Clan! "She has trained hard to understand your noble code, and I commend her a warrior to you in her turn."

Skypaw saw Shadepaw's paws shuffle in anticipation. "Shadepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and

defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

"I do," Shadepaw answered, confidently. Skypaw saw a few members of the Clan nod their heads approvingly.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name. Shadepaw, from this moment on, you will be known as-" Sunstar looked around frantically. When Skypaw noticed his gaze focus on a puddle of melted snow, he hurriedly continued, "Shadepool."

Shadepool didn't seem to notice the lapse in Sunstar's speech, but the fact that Sunstar came to the ceremony unprepared did not miss Skypaw. Sunstar had just named her noble sister after a pool of water from melted snow! Out of all of Shadepool's outstanding qualities and characteristics, *that* is what was reflected upon her name. Anger coursed through her veins. *How could he not care about something as important as a warrior name?*

"StarClan honors your dedication and determination, and we welcome you as a full member of ThunderClan."

Sunstar rested his muzzle on Shadepool's head, and she licked his shoulder, as she had been instructed to do by Russetsky. The Clan erupted in cheers and howls of, "Shadepool! Shadepool! Shadepool!"

Shadepool returned to her seat next to her sisters. Rainpaw and Skypaw both licked her head in congratulations.

"Rainpaw, please come forward," Sunstar meowed, patting his paw against a falling leaf in boredom. Rainpaw enthusiastically, but calmly, made her way to her place in front of him.

After repeating the beginning of the speech for Rainpaw, Sunstar asked her, "Rainpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

"I do," Rainpaw's soft voice washed over the clearing.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name. Rainpaw, from this moment on, you will be known as-" Once again, Sunstar paused. His eyes wandered across the clearing, obviously looking for something he could name Rainpaw. Skypaw scoffed

quietly. *Is this really happening?*

Sunstar's eyes rested on Petalheart, the snowy she-cat that had mentored Rainpaw. Nodding decisively, he finished his speech. "Rainpetal."

Rainpetal's eyes lit up. She, too, seemed to have missed the lapse in his speech, just as Shadepool did. Her eyes beamed as she whipped around to look at her former mentor. Petalheart looked shocked, but joyful, that her former apprentice had been named after her. Rainpetal clearly found pride and dignity within the name of Petalheart, as she held her tail high as her Clan proudly chanted, "Rainpetal! Rainpetal! Rainpetal!"

Once Rainpetal returned to her seat after the traditional closing of her ceremony, Skypaw and Shadepool touched noses with her. Skypaw shakily rose to her paws, knowing that this was her turn. Anxiety caused her heart to beat a million times per minute as Sunstar beckoned her to her place in front of him.

The eyes of her Clanmates burned into her fur as she made her way through them. She reluctantly stared into her leader's harsh green gaze as he began her long awaited warrior ceremony.

"I, Sunstar, leader of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice." Sunstar's gaze was taunting as he stared into her eyes. A shiver rippled through Skypaw's pelt, and she prayed that her Clan didn't notice. "She has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend her a warrior to you in her turn."

Skypaw felt uneasy. She knew that the cat performing her warrior ceremony did not respect the warrior ancestors that he was calling upon. He was even involved in a plot to destroy them! Her ceremony was being based off of a wicked, evil lie that she had no way of doing anything about in that moment. For once, the prophecy's mysterious words were of great comfort to her. *The sky will fall on the sun*, she thought. *You will be done for*.

"Skypaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

"Yes," She meowed, a little fiercer than she intended to. Skypaw wanted her wicked leader to know that she *would* defend her Clan, and that she *would* give up her life, even if it meant going up against him.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name." Skypaw was expecting the same lapse in the ceremony that Sunstar had given to Rainpetal and Shadepool, but to her surprise, it did not come. Sunstar knew exactly what her warrior name would be. "Skypaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Skyfall."

Skyfall's blood turned to ice. Skyfall? As in the sky that will fall?

He knows.

Chapter 19

Skyfall stood there as still as a deer in headlights as her Clan cheered her new name. "Skyfall! Skyfall! Skyfall!"

She cringed as she reached her head forward. Sunstar's heavy muzzle rested on her, and Skyfall noticed that he was purring. A sinister feeling washed over her.

He really does know.

Fighting her hesitancy, she rasped her tongue over his shoulder. His fur was rough and was far from the silky smooth fur that she and her sisters had. Hawkspirit's soft fur was like a dream compared to Sunstar's. She couldn't help but notice the faint stench of blood coming from her leader. It was so faint that she worried she was imagining it.

She shook her head ever so slightly to clear it. She couldn't let on that she was surprised that Sunstar knew of her role in the prophecy - or that he knew that there was a prophecy at all! She swung around with as much confidence as she could muster. She met the excited and delighted gazes of her Clan - of the new apprentices, of Appleleaf, of Featherfur and Bumblefoot, of her sisters, of Hazelflower, of the new mentors - everyone, except for three cats. Naturally, those three cats were Willowleaf, Russetsky, and Bramblefrost.

Willowleaf chanted her new name with ferocity, but Skyfall could not miss the shock in her amber eyes. Skyfall realized that the intensity in Willowleaf's cheers was the medicine cat's way of letting the smug ThunderClan leader know that she was not afraid.

Cheers were uttered from Russetsky and Bramblefrost's mouths too, but they were faint, as they too were taken aback by Sunstar's choice. Skyfall knew that her parents were aware of the prophecy, but she wasn't sure how much they actually knew about it. She recalled the day she overheard Willowleaf discussing it with her

parents over Sandstar as she was dying. She supposed that they were just piecing it together that Sunstar had made her name a mockery of that very prophecy.

With her tail held high, she proceeded down the path. Sunstar hollered that the Clan was dismissed as she was making her way back to her littermates.

"Hi, Sky*fall!*" Rainpetal greeted. There was a glimmer in her eye as she said Skyfall's warrior name for the first time. Shadepool meowed a greeting, but then dismissed herself to get some prey to eat. Rainpetal followed shortly after.

Skyfall was on her way to the medicine den to consult with Willowleaf over the events that just shocked them both until multiple voices reached her ears.

"Skyfall! Skyfall!" Excited meows called her name. Skyfall turned around to see three excited apprentices bouncing over to her.

"We're going outside of camp for the first time!" Brackenpaw chirped, his paws leaping slightly off the ground in what was undoubtably excitement.

"Yeah, we're going to see the territory for the first time!" Brightpaw continued. Her green eyes glimmered with anticipation.

"That's wonderful!" Skyfall tried to muster as much excitement for the new apprentices as she could. Despite her genuine happiness for her young friends, her paws were itching towards the medicine den. She knew that Willowleaf was still very unhappy with her for her meeting with Darkface, and the two she-cats hadn't spoken since she had been dismissed from her den earlier that day. Willowleaf hadn't even given her a glance since her conversation with Darkface. Despite this, Skyfall knew that Willowleaf would be dying to talk to her as well. Sunstar's knowledge of the prophecy posed a problem for them all.

"Isn't it?" Brightpaw meowed. Skypaw noticed that while Brackenpaw and Brightpaw were over the moon with exhilaration at their new apprenticeship, Spottedpaw was waiting behind them,

her speckled head angled toward something in the distance.

"Spottedpaw, aren't you excited?" Skyfall questioned, her gaze narrowing in on the smallest apprentice.

"Yes," She quietly answered, clearly absentmindedly. Skyfall followed the she-cat's gaze and noticed that it landed on Sunstar.

Skyfall's heart sank when she realized that Spottedpaw must be afraid of the ThunderClan leader. Obviously, every cat should be afraid of the cat that that Sunstar was - he was diabolical, traitorous, and everything that the Warrior Code stood *against.* But Spottedpaw didn't know that. To her, Sunstar was just her leader. He was the cat she was supposed to look up to and embody herself to be. And she was afraid of him.

Her heart broke for Spottedpaw. When she should be excited about stepping outside of camp for the first time and learning her first battle moves, she was being outwardly confused as to why she was afraid of her leader. *She doesn't deserve this!*

"Brackenpaw!" "Brightpaw!" "Spottedpaw!"

Three different voices tore the new apprentices away from their conversation with Skyfall. The three new mentors were waiting expectantly by the gorse tunnel. Skyfall noticed that they looked almost as giddy as their apprentices. Brackenpaw and Brightpaw chirped their goodbyes. Mousetail's call tore Spottedpaw's eyes away from the ThunderClan leader and the three littermates bounced away towards their mentors, ready to take on the forest.

Relieved to be free from their conversation, Skyfall turned to head towards the medicine den. Emotions swarmed through her. Anger, frustration, and fear took their turns coursing through her veins. She couldn't help feeling as if multiple cats had been gipped from personal, important things today. She, for one, had her long awaited warrior name tainted by the prophecy that haunted her life. Not only was it tainted, it was also a mockery - Sunstar wanted Skyfall to know that he was aware of StarClan's 'scheme' to take him down.

Beyond her, Rainpetal and Shadepool had their warrior names become a product of Sunstar's laziness. The fiery tom hadn't even bothered to come up with names with meaning that reflected her sisters' unique and individual traits and abilities. While neither of her sisters seemed to notice or care - Rainpetal seemed quite fond of her name honoring Petalheart - Skyfall's heart still ached for them. What was supposed to be an emotionally intimate ceremony was Sunstar pulling names out from under his tail at the very last second.

Finally, Featherfur's kits were also scammed out of their apprentice ceremony. All four of them were beyond excited for this next chapter in their lives, and Sunstar had blandly spoken the words of their ceremonies, with annoyance and irritation creeping into his tone. He had even played around with a leaf with his paw in the midst of it in boredom. Featherfur's bright and lively kits deserved better. Spottedpaw was even unfortunate enough to have been spooked by Sunstar's sinister demeanor, without knowing why.

Skyfall padded into Willowleaf's den to find Amberpaw excitedly sorting a pile of herbs that Willowleaf had left her. Willowleaf watched silently over her shoulder, and Skyfall could see how impressed she was at Amberpaw's agility with her sorting. Skyfall was reminded of a time where she was able to watch Amberpaw sort prey with Spottedpaw when they were kits. Just as she was doing now, Willowleaf watched from a distance, interest shining in her eyes.

Hazelflower was next to her nest, stretching her sprained shoulder. Skyfall noticed that the black warrior seemed almost completely healed, as her eyes no longer narrowed in pain from the use of her shoulder. She had also handled herself very well during her warrior assessment earlier that day, hardly relying on Petalheart for support. Skyfall purred to herself when she realized her friend would be returning to her warrior duties any day now.

When Willowleaf saw Skyfall's silver pelt duck into the den, she quickly padded over to Amberpaw, escaping from her place behind her.

"Amberpaw, I'm going to visit with Skyfall for a few moments," She

meowed to her new apprentice. "In the meantime, you can keep sorting. You're doing a great job!"

Skyfall knew that Willowleaf truly meant her words by the way purrs escaped her mouth as she spoke them. Hazelflower, now realizing that Skyfall was in the den, rushed over to greet her.

"Skyfall!" She greeted, "I'm so proud of you! You looked great up there!"

Relief flooded over Skyfall when she realized that her shock and horror was not apparent to her Clan. She knew that her friend would be honest with her if it had been, as she would have wanted to know what was wrong.

"Thank you, Hazelflower," Skyfall replied with purrs. "I owe it all to you."

Hazelflower's eyes lit up and the black she-cat erupted into purrs. Before she could manage to respond, Willowleaf had made her way over to the two she-cats.

"Hazelflower, keep doing your exercises," She instructed. "I need to talk to Skyfall for a few moments."

Hazelflower nodded and told Skyfall she'd meet up with her as soon as she was released from Willowleaf's care. Upon realizing that there were too many cats in her den for a private conversation, Skyfall followed the tortoiseshell medicine cat out into the clearing and through the gorse tunnel.

Willowleaf had decided that the safest place for them to discuss what had happened during Skyfall's warrior ceremony was out in the territory. Skyfall wanted to point out to her that there were apprentices touring the forest with their mentors and most likely a patrol out, but Skyfall didn't want to risk pushing Willowleaf's buttons. Willowleaf still had a lot of anger towards her, and she was painfully aware of that. *Besides*, she thought, *the sun is going down. They'll be going back to camp soon anyway.*

The chirping of crickets began to sound and Skyfall could hear a

few critters scurrying into their shelters for the night. Somewhere off into the distance, an owl could be heard hooting as the two she-cats strolled side by side into the darkening forest.

Hi!

I want to apologize for not updating last week. The Fourth of July is my favorite holiday, and I got caught up in the patriotic weekend and forgot to post. So sorry!

With that being said, I hope you all had a great holiday! Do you guys spend your Fourth out on the lake where you live? I'm from Michigan, so every holiday here we spend on the lake (in the summertime, of course - Michiganders know how to do summer best, fight me). I thought that was what everyone did until I was enlightened that many states don't (don't ask why I thought this, as I knew Michigan has a ton of lakes and other states don't but I guess I didn't connect the dots lol)! Going to fairs/carnivals seems like a popular Fourth of July activity in some places. That's so odd to me - I've never had a Fourth of July (or Labor Day, or Memorial Day) that didn't consist of barbecues, tubing, swimming, and boating.

Anyway, I'm so glad I'm finally posting this chapter. There were a few parts of this chapter that I really liked when I was writing it, so I'm happy you guys get to read it finally (this was written a few weeks ago). Reading it back, it's a little choppy in some places, but it's late and I'm too tired to do major editing lol. Maybe I'll go back and fix it later.

One more thing - THANK YOU SO MUCH for 101K reads and 5K votes!!!! These are Skylight's first milestones since I've returned! Eeeek! Thank you guys for all your support. I did the math, and Skylight is getting more votes per chapter than Skyfall did. That's so whack to me, since sequels usually don't do as well as the first book in the series. Thanks so much!!

Till next time!

Kaylin

Chapter 20

Once Willowleaf and Skyfall had trekked far enough into the territory for Willowleaf's comfort, she spun around quickly, stunning Skyfall.

"So, it appears we have a problem," She meowed, her tone as flat as her ears. Skyfall waited for her to continue, but the tortoiseshell she-cat remained silent. A few moments elapsed before Skyfall responded.

"Yes, we do," She agreed, still staring at the ThunderClan medicine cat. She was waiting for Willowleaf's game plan. *Why isn't she saying anything?*

Almost as if Willowleaf had read her thoughts, she continued, "I have no idea what to do."

Skyfall gazed at her with wide eyes. Willowleaf? Baffled? The witty she-cat always had something up her fur! Surely Willowleaf couldn't be stumped, at a time as critical as this?

"But, you have to!" Skyfall exclaimed. She was painfully aware at her kit-ish tone. She definitely was not living up to her new label of a warrior, but she found herself being unable to care.

Ever since she had overheard Willowleaf discussing the prophecy with Sandstar and her parents in the medicine den, Willowleaf had been her guiding paw for everything that had to do with the prophecy. She showed her her place within StarClan's mysterious words, gave her instructions on how to handle herself with anything pertaining it, and gave her a shoulder to lean on when she needed it.

Until now.

Skyfall couldn't fail to realize that this was most likely her own fault. While Willowleaf was harsh and diligent in her orders to her,

Skyfall had failed to obey a good chunk of them. Ever since she was a young apprentice, Skyfall had been blessed with someone she could turn to when it came to the prophecy. While it was true that Willowleaf wasn't involved in the prophecy itself and didn't understand what Skyfall was truly going through, Skyfall always knew that she could talk to her if she needed to. And now, when Willowleaf needed her most, the ThunderClan medicine cat was as lost as she was.

Upon realizing Skyfall's panic, Willowleaf regained her composure. She hadn't necessarily been *un*-calm, but her tone and expressions had lacked any ounce of confidence. Skyfall knew that she was panicking on the inside, but was trying to backtrack and appear like she had everything under control.

"Skyfall," She said, her tone serious. "Do you have any idea how Sunstar found out?"

"No," She responded. She truly had no idea how Sunstar found out about StarClan's prophecy, or her place within it.

A shiver went down her spine. It suddenly became shockingly real to her that Sunstar knew *exactly* who she was. Beforehand, she had been able to blend in with her Clan. She didn't realize how comforting it was to know who *he* was while he remained blissfully unaware of her. To him, she had been just another boring apprentice. It made the fur on her neck raise when she realized that Sunstar had his eye on her, and that he had for StarClan knows how long.

He was expecting any move she had to make against him.

"This is not good," Willowleaf paced back and forth. "If he knows, that means the Dark Forest knows. They know that StarClan knows, before StarClan even knows!"

It pained her to realize how much at a disadvantage StarClan was at. The Dark Forest was gearing up to take them down, and they didn't even know! As Willowleaf frantically pointed out, the Dark Forest knew that StarClan would be receiving the message of their plans, if they hadn't already.

"They're going to step up their game," Skyfall whispered. "They're going to try to catch us when we're not expecting it, before we can build up our defense."

Willowleaf nodded. The sun had finally sunk behind the trees in the distance, and darkness was rapidly washing over the forest. Taking note of that, Willowleaf came to a conclusion.

"I need to go to the Moonpool," She announced. "I need to tell StarClan. This information has been floating around long enough. If only Darkface had just told us sooner-"

Anger flared up within Skyfall. How could she be blaming Darkface for this? He was betraying his own band of warriors by telling them in the first place! Not to mention that he had tried to tell them the night before, but Willowleaf had refused to go based on her own selfish reasons. She hadn't even bothered to listen to him before Skyfall convinced her of the legitimacy of his claims. "This isn't Darkface's fault!"

Willowleaf seemed taken aback by Skyfall's sudden outburst. She blinked once while holding eye contact, but didn't respond. Something within Skyfall knew that Willowleaf was aware that the blame did not rest on Darkface's shoulders - if anything, it rested on hers.

Continuing on as if Skyfall hadn't said anything, "I'll just tell Sunstar I need to take Amberpaw for her formal ceremony at the Moonpool. The mousebrain won't even realize that it isn't half-moon. He doesn't pay attention to anything but himself - and the Dark Forest, apparently. You saw how he acted at the ceremonies."

Skyfall nodded. At least *someone* noticed Sunstar's rude behavior. The Clan hadn't seemed to notice, and if it did, they had kept it to themselves.

Before Skyfall could respond, Willowleaf was bounding away, back towards camp. "I need to hurry!" She called behind her. "Sunstar has probably already updated the Dark Forest on the mouse-dung he did today!"

Skyfall watched the tortoiseshell she-cat disappear into the snow-colored bushes. She suspected that Willowleaf wasn't taking the normal path back to camp to avoid questions being raised if she ran into any mentors with their apprentices. Since the sun was down, they would be in the area returning to camp, if they weren't back already. Skyfall sighed.

She knew she had to get back to camp quickly to perform her silent vigil with her sisters. She would normally be excited for a milestone like this, but the prospect of the Dark Forest launching an attack sooner rather than later weighed down her excitement with stress.

She lifted her muzzle to the sky. Searching for any beacons of light through the thick forest canopy, she was disappointed when she found that her warrior ancestors were covered by clouds. As upsetting as it was, she knew it was fitting. StarClan was about to receive the worst news that it had in StarClan knows how long.

Skyfall took a moment to sit on the chilled ground. She just wanted a moment to breathe before she had to return to camp and be on guard all night. She was utterly exhausted - she had barely gotten any sleep the last few nights. The idea of staying up till dawn made her want to wail like a small kit.

Right when she was about to climb to her aching paws and make her way back, a rustling sound coming from the bushes reached her ears. Figuring that it was one of the new apprentices anticipating to scare her, she waited, somewhat impatiently.

To her surprise, it was not the striped pelt of Brackenpaw, the spotted one of Spottedpaw, or the cream one of Brightpaw. It was a ghostly, transparent pelt, one of no other. She mrrowed in surprise.

"Darkface?" She greeted. "What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to know what Willowleaf was planning to do about Sunstar," His deep meow was loud, even in a whisper. "I saw what had happened during your ceremony."

Surprise pricked at her paws. Darkface really was like a StarClan cat - he was always watching. He must've been hidden in camp

somewhere, undetectable to ThunderClan's unsuspecting senses.

"You were at my ceremony?" She asked, quizzically. Her heart warmed slightly when she realized that her ghostly acquaintance cared enough about her to want to see her become a warrior. However, this warmth subsided quickly when she realized that Sunstar had probably planned this move with the Dark Forest. Darkface probably knew it was going to happen, and wanted to see Willowleaf's reaction. Whichever it was, it was nice of him to be involved, and to want to help the Clans out, especially when his loyalties should technically lie elsewhere.

"Yes," He answered. "So, she's going to the Moonpool to warn StarClan?"

Skypaw nodded in confirmation. Darkface's eyes lit up.

"Finally!" He exclaimed. "I've been trying to get her to go talk to them, but she wouldn't. She doesn't trust me, and until your ceremony, I feel like she didn't fully believe the information I brought her when we were in her den. StarClan needs to get ready, and fast."

"Well, I feel like after all this, she will trust you now," Skyfall meowed, sympathetically. "She knows you aren't lying."

Skyfall could tell that her words were of great comfort to the Dark Forest warrior. His tail raised form its spot on the ground, and his shoulders rested a little higher.

She truly pitied him. She didn't understand how StarClan could have sent a cat killing his mother for the safety of his Clan to the Dark Forest. The oath she had just sworn earlier today made sure that every warrior would protect and defend its Clan. Obviously, Darkface thought his mother was a danger to ThunderClan, so wasn't he just upholding his duty as a warrior?

She was itching to know the details behind what had happened to him, but she knew she'd most likely never find out. Willowleaf would probably die herself before she relived that time in her life. She felt highly uncomfortable asking Darkface directly, since it was

obviously a sensitive subject. If he wanted her to know, he would tell her. She wouldn't pry on some cat's past, especially when they were hardly more than acquaintances. Their relationship was solely based on the prophecy - if she wasn't the sky, she wouldn't even know of his existence.

Skyfall suddenly felt the awkwardness swarming in the air. Darkface began to stutter, "So, I guess I'll see you soon, then."

Skyfall nodded. "Yes, see you soon."

"Good luck with your vigil!" Darkface chirped, beginning to fade away. "You'll be a great warrior, I know it."

"Thank you!" Skyfall could barely finish thanking the ghostly tom before he faded away completely. Not thinking too much of it, she turned, heading her way back to camp.

Her paws filled with dread once more as she realized that she had to stay up and alert until dawn. Sighing to herself, she listened to the chirping of crickets and the scurrying of prey as she made her way through the territory back to camp.

Hiiii I'm sorry that I missed the past few updates! I've been trying to enjoy summer as much as possible before I start college (lol I'm scared). Not really an excuse since I had things prewritten, but it honestly slipped my mind. My boyfriend also has been officially hired as a firefighter recently and I've been celebrating that with him! With all this chaos, I wish that Wattpad had an auto-publish feature.

Expect consistent updates again. I hope you guys enjoyed this mainly boring chapter. There is an exciting (or however you want to put it...) event coming up though...stay tuned!

Enjoy your week!

Kaylin

Chapter 21

The camp was dark as the clouds blocked most of the moon's bright light from shining into camp. Skyfall was positioned near the gorse tunnel, while Rainpetal and Shadepool took positions in the clearing, facing different directions.

Skyfall knew how important it was for her to stay awake during her vigil, but her eyes weighed heavy with sleep. It would help if she was allowed to talk to her sisters, but unfortunately for her, the Warrior Code prohibited such a thing. The camp was silent, with the only things reaching her ears being the slowed breathing of her sleeping Clannmates and a chilled breeze flying over camp. There was absolutely nothing to entertain her.

To her, this day felt like it lasted forever. She had her argument with Willowleaf, taken her warrior assessment, received her warrior name, and then had to talk to Willowleaf in the territory. She even had an unexpected conversation with Darkface. All she wanted to do was curl up in her new nest in the warriors' den and sleep the rest of her life away.

Speaking of the ThunderClan medicine cat, she had taken off to the Moonpool as soon as she had returned to camp. Skyfall wasn't sure if she had notified Sunstar of where she was going as she had originally planned to do. If anything, she may have just returned to camp to alert Amberpaw of her absence. Skyfall hoped that Willowleaf had decided not to talk to their leader, because the chances of him letting her go unscathed to the Moonpool were slim.

Glancing at her sisters, she realized that her exhaustion was not limited to her. Shadepool looked alert and ready to attack anything that dared enter camp, but Rainpetal looked as if she was about to flop over at any moment. She chuckled slightly to herself at the stark difference.

Shadepool had always been the most ambitious between the three

of them. It was her that was determined to climb to the top of the nursery when they were kits, it was her that saved Skyfall in the battle with ShadowClan when they were apprentices with her battle skills, and it was her that looked as if she was ready for a fight anytime, anywhere. Rainpetal, on the other hand, was quite compassionate and delicate. Rainpetal possessed the biggest heart out of any cat that Skyfall knew. She always wanted to help others, was always sharing her prey, and avoided any conflict that she could. She was sensitive, easily hurt emotionally, but she did her best to hide it. In a situation where Rainpetal would cower with her feelings hurt, when faced in the same position, Shadepool wouldn't hesitate to rack her paw against the source of the insult.

Skyfall thought of herself as a mix between the two. She wasn't nearly as ferocious as Shadepool was, but she wasn't as sensitive as Rainpetal. Skyfall would definitely fight in a battle if she needed to, but she wouldn't be the first to throw claws. She definitely had some emotional sensitivity, as she always found herself questioning why Willowleaf looked at her as if she was some mousebrained kit, but that sensitivity only fueled her anger and determination, not her cowardice. Skyfall was pleased that her characteristics seemed to be a blend of her sisters. It made her feel as though she was connected to them more deeply than she actually was. Even though she was on better terms with them now than she ever was when they were kits, Shadepool and Rainpetal's bond was always stronger than hers was with either of them.

A low yowl snapped her from her thoughts. Rainpetal, upon hearing it, fell on her face, being snapped from her doze. She quickly jumped to her paws, and both her and Skyfall looked at Shadepool. Shadepool's head was cocked towards the direction of the nursery.

"I think it came from the nursery," Shadepool whispered. Skyfall and Rainpetal, nodding in agreement, hurriedly crept towards the almost empty den. Flowermoon was the only queen still residing in it, as Featherfur had moved back to the warriors' den shortly after her kits became apprentices earlier that day.

After the three scouted the outskirts of the nursery and scanned the ledge above the camp - having learned from Dapplestar's attack - Shadepool ducked inside the nursery. Skyfall followed while

Rainpetal waited outside of the den, keeping watch for any intruders they may have missed.

What they found when they entered the nursery was no intruder. They found Flowermoon, laying on her side, her plump belly raising and falling rapidly as she breathed hectically.

"My kits," She mustered between breaths. "I think they're coming!"

Shadepool and Skyfall's eyes were as wide as the moon as they stared at the laboring queen. There was no doubt that her kits would be making their appearance before dawn. In fact, Skyfall was surprised that Flowermoon was able to remain so quiet for so long. By this point, Featherfur had been so loud that she suspected RiverClan could hear her.

"I'll go get Willowleaf!" Shadepool nodded, decisively. Skyfall went to agree until her stomach sank and her blood turned to ice.

Willowleaf's at the Moonpool!

Shadepool bounded out of the den. Skyfall, letting Flowermoon know that she intended to follow Shadepool, leaped out after her. Shadepool was already a few fox lengths down the clearing when Skyfall managed to emerge from the den.

"Shadepool!" She hissed lowly. Shadepool stopped in her tracks, not being able to miss Skyfall's call with the silent camp. She whipped around, confusion in her green eyes.

"W-Willowleaf's not here," She whispered, not wanting Flowermoon to hear her. Shadepool's eyes widened, and she began to walk back to her two sisters.

"Why do we need Willowleaf?" Rainpetal meowed, questioningly. Skyfall realized that Rainpetal must have thought all was well when Shadepool exited the den without a word, thus returning to her silent vigil.

"Flowermoon's kits are coming," Skyfall and Shadepool answered at once. They were still careful to keep their voices low. They didn't want to alarm Flowermoon, as her remaining calm was essential to

her kits' safe arrival.

Rainpetal's eyes lit up in delight. "More kits for ThunderClan!" She exclaimed, her tone celebratory. Her happiness quickly dissipated as she looked at the expressions on Shadepool and Skyfall's faces.

"Willowleaf isn't here," Skyfall repeated. These words registered in Rainpetal's mind this time, and within a second, her face reflected the fear that was on her sisters'.

"Where is she?" Shadepool asked, her attention focusing back on Skyfall.

"The Moonpool," Skyfall answered, without thinking. She realized she should have lied and said she didn't know, but she hadn't even had time to think about it before the words slipped from her mouth. Her paws filled with dread as she anticipated the questions that were to follow.

"Why?" Shadepool and Rainpetal asked at once. Their eyes burned into Skyfall's, and she stared at her paws.

"I'm not sure," She lied. She felt guilty for lying to her sisters, but she had no other choice. *What am I supposed to say?* She asked herself. *Hey, the Dark Forest is attacking StarClan soon, and Willowleaf and I found out because her Dark Forest warrior brother told us. Oh yeah, and I'm apart of a prophecy that's supposed to help save ThunderClan from our evil leader, and that's how I know about it.*

Shadepool cocked her head in curiosity, and Rainpetal just stared blankly, thinking about Flowermoon and her kits.

"This isn't good," Rainpetal whispered, her eyes serious. "Willowleaf always talked about how she's having at least five kits, and how dangerous it's going to be for her to give birth. Remember Featherfur? She almost died and she only had four!"

Fear struck Skyfall. She knew that any cat delivering kits without the help of a medicine cat was dangerous, but she had completely forgotten about how high-risk Flowermoon's pregnancy was. She wasn't guaranteed survival in the first place, and especially not now

without Willowleaf's aid!

"I-I'll go get Amberpaw," Shadepool stuttered. Rainpetal stared at her, baffled.

"She *just* became an apprentice today!" Rainpetal exclaimed. "She doesn't know anything!"

"Well, what do you suppose we do, Rainpetal?" Shadepool snapped, her ears flattening. "No one here knows how to deliver kits! She may have became an apprentice only today, but she's better than nothing! Maybe Willowleaf anticipated this and taught her a few basics before she left!"

Skyfall's stomach sank to her paws once again. What Rainpetal and Shadepool didn't know was that Willowleaf's departure was not planned. Willowleaf had decided to go to the Moonpool in the spur of the moment when they were trying to figure out what to do about Sunstar's knowledge of the prophecy. Skyfall knew that if Willowleaf believed Flowermoon's kits were to come that night, she never would have left, no matter how desperate they were to warn StarClan. Willowleaf never would have left the queen's side, knowing how dangerous her birth would be.

Suddenly, an idea struck Skyfall. *She* knew of a cat who could deliver kits.

"You go get Amberpaw," Skyfall bursted. "I'll go get Hawkspirit."

Shadepool and Rainpetal's heads snapped to look at her.

"Hawkspirit?" Rainpetal questioned. "ShadowClan's medicine cat apprentice?"

"Yes," Skyfall meowed, matter-of-factly. Regret stabbed at her paws when she realized she should have suggested Nightflare first. Nightflare was still ShadowClan's medicine cat, despite Hawkspirit having received his medicine cat name moons ago. She was more experienced, and thus the more desired option. *Mousebrain!*

"Sunstar would never let *him* back in our camp!" Shadepool hissed. "Him and Nightflare lured out Willowleaf so ShadowClan could

attack us!"

Anger flared within Skyfall. How dare she say those falsehoods about Hawkspirit? Skyfall knew that Hawkspirit would never have done such a thing, and she believed him when he denied it. He was just as much of a victim in Dapplestar's wicked plan as ThunderClan was!

"Do you want Flowermoon to die?" Skyfall hissed, making sure to keep her voice low so the tortoiseshell queen wouldn't hear her speaking about the grim possibility. "You know just as much as I do that Amberpaw doesn't know anything beyond sorting herbs! This would be a difficult delivery even for Willowleaf!"

Shadepool stared at Skyfall, anger in her eyes. However, after a few moments, the anger washed away. Skyfall knew that the logic had reached Shadepool's comprehension. The black she-cat nodded, and Skyfall and Rainpetal let out a simultaneous sigh of relief.

"We cannot tell Sunstar," Skyfall continued, knowing that Shadepool's claim about him never letting Hawkspirit in camp was correct. "We can't wake him up. Flowermoon's life depends on it."

Her sisters flicked their tails in acknowledgement. Skyfall was flooded with relief when she realized that their plan was to be kept secret. She cared deeply for Flowermoon's wellbeing, but she was also immensely worried about what Sunstar would do to Hawkspirit if he found out he was in ThunderClan's camp, right under his nose.

"I'm going to wait with Flowermoon," Rainpetal meowed, nervousness in her voice. Skyfall could tell that Rainpetal was genuinely concerned that Flowermoon would die before help could arrive. The light gray warrior ducked her head into the nursery just as another low yowl escaped the den.

Skyfall was appreciative of Flowermoon's attempts to stay quiet. She wasn't sure why the tortoiseshell she-cat was so determined to go undetected. Skyfall was sure that if they weren't keeping vigil that night, no one would know that her kits were coming. Refocusing, Skyfall was relieved that Flowermoon was being so quiet because she didn't want Sunstar to be alerted of any ruckus in

the camp. She desperately needed Hawkspirit to remain safe.

"I'll go get Amberpaw," Shadepool meowed. "Maybe she can help with something until Hawkspirit and Nightflare arrive."

Skyfall nodded as Shadepool turned around to bound to the medicine cat den. Skypaw felt a pang of sadness for Amberpaw. She was about to deal with one of the most complicated cases Willowleaf had ever seen, and she didn't know anything to help!

Skyfall's paws were silently carrying her to the gorse tunnel. As soon as she had safely made it out of camp, she took off in a sprint. Her paws slipped and slid on the newly formed ice patches on the paths, but she persisted. Flowermoon's life depended on it, and she looked forward to being near Hawkspirit once again.

Before long, she found herself darting over the ShadowClan border. She coughed, as her nostrils were filled with the overwhelming scent of ShadowClan without any adjustment period. The moon suddenly emerged from the clouds, lighting up ShadowClan's marshy territory. Skyfall was thankful that her warrior ancestors lit up her difficult path for her.

Maybe Willowleaf warned them, she wondered as her paws carried her as fast as they would go. *Maybe this is a sign that they are strong, and that they will not back down.*

Hi friends!

I have a few things to discuss with you guys.

I have been getting numerous messages/comments about when I will begin accepting art to begin decorating chapters. I have been trying to figure out what the best way to get art is (since Wattpad does not have a feature to send photos over messages), so this is my best idea. Please weigh in and comment here if this is a good idea/if it will or will not work for you.

I was thinking about making an Instagram page for my Wattpad account (basically a place where you all could DM me

your photos). I figure that most people do have Instagram, as it's the most popular social media site for our generation. I was thinking that I'd post cool updates about the series' progression there as well, and make roleplay posts and have fun trivia polls and things like that. Basically, its main purpose would be to get art from your phones to mine, but I'd also like to have fun with it as well.

However, I realize that some people (especially younger people) may have strict parents who do not allow social media. My solution to this would be to provide an email address to send art to so I can receive it that way as an alternative. With that being said, I am expecting a few people to be unable to do the Instagram thing, but if Instagram isn't doable for most of you, I'd like to know before I create an account for it! So please, if you plan on submitting art, comment if Instagram will work for you or if I should start thinking of different ideas.

Moving on, I just want to thank you all for all the support you've given me since I've returned. I believe when I first came back I had around 1.2K-1.5K followers, and now I have 2.3K! It's insane to me how many followers I've gained in such a short amount of time. Thank you all endlessly for your follows, votes, and comments. It truly means the world.

Until next Friday (or maybe sooner if I remember the other things I was going to say)!

Kaylin

Chapter 22

Skyfall's lungs burned with every breath. She was sprinting her way through ShadowClan's mucky territory, on her way to bring Hawkspirit back to camp with her. She hoped and prayed that Sunstar was still blissfully unaware of Flowermoon's labor, as she would never be able to forgive herself if something happened to her beloved Hawkspirit because of something she suggested.

Even with the pale moonlight casting throughout ShadowClan's prickly forest, it was hard for Skyfall to see. This lighting would be more than suitable if she was on a venture through her own territory, but considering she had only visited ShadowClan's territory twice - once after Willowleaf's exile, and another on her quest to speak with Hawkspirit - she was having trouble navigating.

She knew the general direction of where she was going. Fear pricked at her paws when she remembered just how eerie ShadowClan cats were. They not only attacked ThunderClan in the midst of her territory, they attacked ThunderClan in their camp - the next level of cruel. Just her luck, these cats hated her more than the rest of her Clan - she was Russetsky's kin. These cats would jump at any advantage to rip her to shreds, and here she was, running through their territory and into their camp. Alone.

Skyfall was grateful that at least Dapplestar was no longer their leader. While Skyfall felt pity for the rough life her grandmother had, she couldn't shake the atrocities that the dappled she-cat committed throughout her life. She killed the ShadowClan deputy, just so she could take his place. She attacked Willowleaf, a medicine cat who was off limits when it came to battle. She even tried to kill Skyfall herself, twice - just because she was Russetsky's daughter!

Or maybe it was because I'm the sky.

Willowleaf and Skyfall were still unsure how long the Dark Forest

knew of her identity. She figured that they must have known about the prophecy first, and pieced together her identity as time went on. It still freaked her out to think that they were aware of her, and that she had no idea that she wasn't the invisible apprentice she had originally thought she was.

Thankfully, ShadowClan's camp came into view. Skyfall was relieved that she didn't get lost or run into any other trouble on her way there. As she made her way through the snow-covered pines, she suddenly heard a yowl of alarm coming from the camp.

The fur on her neck raised when she realized they were aware of her presence. She obviously needed them to know that she was arriving - she needed their help, after all - but this was a new feeling for her. She was used to sneaking around their territory and trying to disguise herself. Making herself known to ShadowClan was a new and uncomfortable feeling.

A patrol of three cats met her at the thorn tunnel, which was the entrance to their camp. Skyfall immediately recognized the fluffy white pelt of Frosttail, the snotty warrior she had faced in battle, and from when her and Willowleaf warned ShadowClan about the monsters on the edge of their territory. Her eyes were ablaze, and Skyfall couldn't help but notice that her long claws were unsheathed.

The next cat was Moonstar, ShadowClan's new leader. The pale brown she-cat was evidently surprised to see Skyfall.

"Skypaw," She meowed, her voice strong and monotone. "What are you doing here?"

Skyfall was surprised to hear her apprentice name. Even though she had just received her warrior name earlier that day, it felt like a moon ago with everything going on around her. She hadn't even thought about the fact that to ShadowClan, she was still that young apprentice they had seen in battle and at Gatherings. She hadn't even realized that Hawkspirit was unaware of her new status.

"Skyfall," She corrected, dipping her head in respect. The last thing she needed was to tick off ShadowClan's leader. "I have come to ask

for aid."

Frosttail snickered, her tail whisking back and forth. Moonstar looked taken aback at her request for help. Skyfall knew how surprised the ShadowClan leader must be - ThunderClan bragged about their strength both in battle and at Gatherings, and here she was, asking their hostile rival for help.

"Congratulations on receiving your warrior name," Moonstar began. Skyfall knew that she probably didn't mean her congratulatory gesture, but was rather just trying to buy herself time to plan her response. "Help regarding...?"

"Flowermoon's kits are coming," Skyfall explained. She saw Frosttail's spirits fall when the frosty warrior realized that ThunderClan was not being attacked by another Clan, and that their physical strength still remained.

"Did Sunstar exile Willowleaf again?" Moonstar questioned.

"No, but she is away," Skyfall continued, in a hurry. She knew that the longer they waited, Flowermoon's chances of survival were dropping. The chances of Sunstar remaining unaware of Willowleaf's absence were also falling by the moment. "Flowermoon is expecting a large litter of kits. Willowleaf has spoken about how dangerous her birth will be, and now that it is time for her kits to be born, Willowleaf isn't here to assist her."

Moonstar nodded. Skyfall imagined that she was pondering her options. Her gaze finally found its way to the third cat in Moonstar's patrol. Skyfall had to stifle a meow of surprise when she realized who it was.

It was no other than Littlepaw. Littlepaw's identical sky blue eyes were staring intensely at Skyfall, with an emotion that Skyfall could not place.

Littlepaw's presence had caught Skyfall off guard. She had been dreaming of all of the things she would say to the small gray she-cat if she was able to speak with her about the prophecies. And here she was! Standing before her, in the flesh.

"Littlepaw," Skyfall greeted, not knowing what else to do under Littlepaw's penetrating gaze. She flicked her tail in greeting.

"It's Littleberry, now," The gray she-cat corrected, her tail mimicking Skyfall's gesture. Skyfall didn't know what else to do but nod. She knew that there was no way Littleberry could know that Skyfall was a chosen cat. Littleberry broke eye contact, glancing at her leader.

"Please, come into camp," Moonstar finally meowed. Frosttail's tail lashed, as she clearly disapproved of her leader's invite. It took everything within Skyfall not to roll her eyes at Frosttail's immature hostility. The four she-cats turned, and Skyfall found herself getting pricked while crawling through ShadowClan's thorn tunnel.

When Skyfall made her way into the ShadowClan camp, it appeared as if every cat in the Clan was out in the clearing, staring at her. Warriors and apprentices stood in front of the elders, who had emerged from their den, and guarded the nursery. Upon a closer look, Skyfall could see the tiny eyes of kits through the nursery's bramble wall, peering at her with wild curiosity.

Her eyes raked over the clearing. She felt horrendously uncomfortable under the gaze of so many cats. Their curious and unwelcoming eyes burned into her pelt, and she did not know what else to do besides stare back at them. As she was about to turn away, her eyes caught the familiar dark blue gaze that she knew all too well.

Hawkspirit had emerged from the medicine den, and he was staring at her intensely. His eyes were blank, clearly sheltering any emotion that he had from his fellow Clanmates. He remained behind a band of warriors, probably resisting any urge his paws had to dash over to her.

Not wanting to arouse suspicion, she forced her attention away from him. She returned it to Moonstar, who had leapt up onto the branch that hung above her den. Irritation pricked at her paws when she realized that she was about to call a Clan meeting, during a time as delicate as this!

"Let all cats gather," She meowed. It was a pointless gesture, since the entire Clan was already out into the clearing, wanting to know why a meager ThunderClan "apprentice" was in their camp, alone.

"Skyfall has come to ShadowClan asking for our assistance," She announced. Skyfall heard multiple scoffs throughout the crowd of cats, and she shifted on her paws uncomfortably. "Flowermoon has gone into a supposedly dangerous labor, and Willowleaf is absent. She requests the help of our medicine cats."

A ripple of murmurs made their way through the crowd. Skyfall heard multiple different things - a few cats mentioning the fact that she was now a warrior, another few wondering where Willowleaf was, and some explaining her half-Clan heritage to others.

"Where is Willowleaf?" A deep meow rang through the clearing. Its source was a cat she didn't recognize, but he was an older tom, most likely a senior warrior. His pelt was black, and his eyes were a bright yellow.

"Good question, Blackdust." The light brown leader turned her attention back to Skyfall. "Skyfall, where is Willowleaf?"

Skyfall stared at her blankly. She considered coming up with a lie, but there was no better excuse than the truth. "She's at the Moonpool,"

"The Moonpool!" A voice exclaimed, somewhere from the crowd. "Willowleaf going to the Moonpool by herself instead of waiting for half-moon? ThunderClan's clearly in trouble!"

Multiple voices snickered and Skyfall was filled with disgust when she heard a few purrs rise up from the gathering of cats.

"Sorrelpaw!" A voice snapped. Skyfall turned her head to see the dark pelt of Nightflare. Her eyes were ablaze in anger. "Medicine cats make independent journeys to the Moonpool all of the time when there is no cause for alarm. That is no way to treat a peaceful guest!"

The cat, now identified as Sorrelpaw, ducked her head in shame at

being scolded by Nightflare. Skyfall shot her an appreciative glance, as she knew that what she was saying was not necessarily true. Skyfall figured that Nightflare was, in part, trying to protect ShadowClan's prophecy from being exposed to her Clan, and Skyfall guessed that she and Hawkspirit may have made a few of their own trips to visit StarClan.

"Settle down, everyone," Moonstar meowed sternly. Two pelts of strong toms patted into camp. They nodded at Moonstar, and she flicked her tail in acknowledgment before continuing. "Ratscar and Snowlight have searched the territory, and they have found no ThunderClan cats anywhere."

Learning from their own tactics, I suppose, Skyfall hissed to herself.

"Upon getting this confirmation," Moonstar continued. "I have no reason to believe that this is a stage for an attack. This is matter of a mother and her kits, not of hostilities between Clans,"

Skyfall's eyes lit up. Flowermoon would be receiving help after all!

"But, just to be sure," Moonstar meowed, shooting a glance at Skyfall. "We still be sending Hawkspirit. We will be keeping our most experienced medicine cat here in camp." Skyfall knew that Moonstar elaborated so Skyfall would get the message that they were prepared in case ThunderClan had any tricks up their fur.

Skyfall nodded. "ThunderClan gives our deepest thanks."

Moonstar flicked her tail. "Hawkspirit, gather any herbs you may need, and be on your way."

Hawkspirit flicked his tail in acknowledgment, ducking into the medicine den. Moonstar dismissed the Clan, who began to retire to their dens when nothing exciting occurred. Nightflare approached Skyfall near the thorn tunnel.

"Greetings, Skyfall," She meowed, ducking her head. "I am sorry to hear about Flowermoon."

"Hopefully, with ShadowClan's help, she and her kits will make a full recovery."

Nightflare nodded. "Hawkspirit is a fine medicine cat, I do not doubt his abilities in the slightest. She's in good paws."

Skyfall was about to agree, but she stopped herself. She didn't want to say anything that may suggest a relationship between her and Hawkspirit. She knew she was most likely just being paranoid, but she didn't want to chance it.

After a lull in their conversation, Nightflare meowed, "Please send my best wishes to Willowleaf."

"I will," Skyfall responded, warmly. The two she-cats touched noses. Hawkspirit padded up, a bundle of herbs in his mouth.

"Are we ready?" He asked, his words muffled by all of the herbs in his mouth. Skyfall nodded, saying goodbye to Nightflare. She thanked Moonstar again, who was still sitting on her branch, watching Skyfall intently.

Hawkspirit and Skyfall ducked through the thorn tunnel. They began their trek through ShadowClan's musky territory, their tails clashing together ever so slightly as they made their way away from the ShadowClan campground and into the crisp leafbare moonlight.

This chapter sucked. I'm sorry, I kept trying to come up with a better ending but y'all, I got nothin. I'm especially sorry because I know I missed an update or two, and this is what you guys got - nothing exciting. Well, stay tuned!

I'm still working on the Instagram page! Hopefully it'll be up by next week.

I start college in literally 3 days. I AM SO NERVOUS Y'ALL. Do I know where I'm going on campus? Nope. Do I have any idea what I want to do with my degree when I graduate? Nope. Do I have any friends going to my university? Nope. Greatttttt.

Pls pray for me. Like, seriously. I'm a wreck!!!!

Kaylin

Chapter 23

"Hawkspirit, I-"

"Not here," Hawkspirit mumbled through his bundle of herbs. They were still in ShadowClan territory, as pine needles pricked at Skyfall's paws with nearly every step they took. They were walking at a brisk pace. Skyfall was dying to go faster, but Hawkspirit insisted to go at a slower pace to avoid crushing or dropping any valuable herbs they may need.

Skyfall shut her mouth. She had thought that they were far enough away from ShadowClan's camp by now, and that it was safe for them to talk, but clearly Hawkspirit disagreed. The only contact they had made was the slight touch of their tails as they walked. They made sure to keep a further distance than they normally would have when they were alone. Their distance pulled at Skyfall's heart, as she so desperately wanted to rub up against his warm fur, but she knew better.

The ThunderClan border came into view, and Skyfall could begin to detect faint ThunderClan scent markers. Hawkspirit seemed to recognize the shortening distance as well, as Skyfall could feel him begin to loosen up, the tension falling from his stature.

Deciding that she would attempt to speak again, she whispered, "Thank you for coming."

Hawkspirit nodded. "I'm sorry that I am being quiet," He meowed with sincerity. "ShadowClan doesn't trust you. Or any of ThunderClan. I wouldn't be surprised if they had been following us."

Skyfall flicked her ear in acknowledgment. She knew how ShadowClan felt about her, and about her Clan. Irritation rose up within her when she thought about the fact that ShadowClan really thought there was a possibility that ThunderClan used a potentially dying queen and her kits as bait into battle. *The fact that they think we'd do that is a reflection unto them*, She concluded to herself. *Since*

they thought of it, they wouldn't be past using it.

"So, Willowleaf went to the Moonpool?" Hawkspirit asked, curiosity thick in his mew.

"Yes," Skyfall confirmed. "We had a bit of an event happen today during my warrior ceremony."

Hawkspirit's eyes lit up. "Your warrior ceremony! I almost forgot!" His throat erupted into purrs. "I'm so proud of you, Skyfall - wait, Sky*fall?"*

Skyfall flicked her tail. "I see you've discovered our event," She chuckled. "Sunstar knows about the prophecy."

Hawkspirit was silent. She knew that he had a million thoughts racing through his head, just as she had when she heard her name for the first time. However, she didn't want to focus on the prophecy right now. She was exhausted, and there was an emergency back at camp. Hawkspirit needed to focus on what she had gotten him for - Flowermoon!

"Flowermoon's carrying a lot of kits," She quickly changed the subject. "Willowleaf said previously that she thought there was at least five."

Hawkspirit's ears perked in surprise. "Five? That's a lot, especially for a cat of her size." His voice reflected his worry.

"Willowleaf has been saying it will be very dangerous for her," Skyfall meowed, picking up her pace. "We need to hurry. Not only is Flowermoon in grave trouble, but we can't let Sunstar know you're coming to camp."

"Wait, Sunstar doesn't know I'm coming?" Hawkspirit asked, turning his head to look at her. Fear was evident in the ShadowClan medicine cat's eyes. She knew that he must be scared out of his fur, considering that it was beyond obvious that Sunstar had a disdain for all medicine cats, but especially ShadowClan's. He knew as well as she did that Sunstar still blamed Hawkspirit and Nightflare for the first battle between ShadowClan and ThunderClan that she had

been around for.

"No," Skyfall confessed. "But it'll be okay. Flowermoon's been very quiet, and the only people who knew about her labor when I left was Rainpetal, Shadepool and I, since we were keeping our silent vigil."

"Why didn't she call for anyone?" Hawkspirit asked, curiosity thick in his mew. Skyfall could tell that his worries had subsided upon knowing that Sunstar would remain unaware of his visit for the time being.

"I don't know," Skyfall admitted. "It's almost like she didn't want someone to know."

Hawkspirit flicked his tail. The two mates quickened their pace as they crossed the ThunderClan border. Skyfall immediately felt more comfortable, as she was finally in her own territory. Instead of walking side-by-side with Hawkspirit, she took the lead, as she knew where to step in ThunderClan's frozen territory.

She felt Hawkspirit begin to slow down, obviously unsure of his footing, but she persisted. She knew chasing after her would keep him on his paws, since he had no other choice unless he wanted to wander by himself in ThunderClan territory.

Before long, she was leading Hawkspirit through the gorse tunnel. Much to her relief, the camp was just as silent as she had left it. Shadepool ducked her head out of the nursery, and relief flooded through her green eyes when she saw Skyfall approaching, Hawkspirit on her heels.

"Thank StarClan!" Shadepool hissed once Skyfall and Hawkspirit had joined them in the nursery.

Flowermoon was still laying on her side, her breathing shallow and rapid. Her paws were curling in pain. Rainpetal had been bringing the queen water that was soaked in moss, but Flowermoon seemed uninterested. Amberpaw was behind Flowermoon, horror plastered on her face as she paced back and forth.

"I don't know what to do! I don't know what to do!" Amberpaw wailed. Seeing Hawkspirit pulled her out of her trance, and she immediately leaped over to him. "I told Rainpetal to get her some water, but I don't know what to d-"

"The first thing you need to do is relax," Hawkspirit meowed sternly. Skyfall was slightly taken aback. She had never seen Hawkspirit in medicine cat mode before, besides for when he had treated her at the abandoned twoleg nest. He had been much gentler to her though, she had remained unaware that he had a stern bone in his body until now. "Stressing her out isn't helping anyone. Flowermoon," He meowed, his tone instantly getting softer as he turned his attention to the queen. "I'm Hawkspirit. I'm a ShadowClan medicine cat, and I'm here to help you."

Flowermoon stared up at him. Skyfall could tell that she was baffled that a ShadowClan medicine cat was helping her deliver her kits, but ultimately, she was in too much pain to care. She let out another low yowl, and Hawkspirit began to bark out orders. "Rainpetal, go get her more water, this is dried up," He instructed. "Shadepool, go find her a stick to bite on."

Her sisters leapt at his orders, bounding out of the nursery. Hawkspirit wasted no time unwrapping his herbs. Glancing up at Amberpaw, he passively asked, "Who are you?"

"I-I'm Amberpaw," She stuttered. "I'm Willowleaf's apprentice."

Hawkspirit looked surprised for a moment, but he flicked his tail in acknowledgement. "You should pay attention, this is a good teaching moment for you."

She nodded, relief flooding through amber eyes. Skyfall, once again, felt pity for the new apprentice. She was barely out of the nursery, and Shadepool had pulled her from her sleep, expecting her to deliver StarClan knows how many kits. Amberpaw just looked happy to know that the pressure was no longer on her, and that she could use this time to learn.

"Flowermoon," Hawkspirit called, his tone soft. "I'm going to give you raspberry leaves. These will help ease your pain."

Flowermoon's eyes lit up at the sound of her pain dissipating. She lifted her head and chewed the leaves that Hawkspirit had laid out for her.

Shadepool ducked into the nursery, fresh moss soaked with water in her jaws. Once she had set it down, Hawkspirit pushed it in front of Flowermoon. The tortoiseshell she-cat weakly lapped at it twice before putting her head back down. She scratched her claws against the bracken wall, looking for anything to escape her pain.

Moments later, Rainpetal returned with a thick stick for Flowermoon. Hawkspirit examined it briefly before nodding approvingly and giving it to the queen. She was very accepting of it, biting down on it almost immediately, using it to stifle another wail.

Hawkspirit began to feel her belly with his paws. Amberpaw watched intently, and Skyfall knew that she was taking mental notes of Hawkspirit's actions. Hawkspirit glanced at Skyfall, muttering, "I believe there's six of them."

"Six?" Flowermoon wailed questioningly, "Willowleaf said there was only five!"

"The sixth is small and hidden between its littermates, I'm not surprised it went unnoticed," Hawkspirit commented. Glancing around the den, Skyfall could see the trouble in his eyes before he began to speak. "Okay, there are too many cats in here," he observed. "You three," He gestured to Skyfall and her sisters with his tail. "Go continue to keep your vigil."

Skyfall was slightly crushed that she couldn't stay in the den with Hawkspirit, but she dipped her head. Shadepool ducked out of the den immediately, clearly uncomfortable with the whole situation. Rainpetal cheered Flowermoon on and gave her her best wishes before following Shadepool. Skyfall waited to see if she could give Hawkspirit an encouraging glance, but he didn't look up from his work. Nodding to herself, she followed her sisters outside.

They returned to their positions, ears perked and alert for any activity within the camp. Skyfall was relieved to find that the night

was hardly half way over, despite how heavy her paws were and how long it felt like it had taken to get Hawkspirit into camp. Willowleaf would be returning by dawn, and Skyfall knew the medicine cat would be both embarrassed and upset that she abandoned Flowermoon during her birth. Her heart felt for her, because she knew Willowleaf didn't intend to cause this situation, and once again, it was all the prophecy's fault.

~*~

A few hours had passed. Worry tingled in her paws when she knew they only had an hour left before the dawn's light would wash over the forest.

Shadepool, Rainpetal and Skyfall exchanged worrying glances. None of them had moved from their vigil positions that they had taken on at the beginning of the night. Skyfall cringed on the occasion that she heard a muffled scream come from the nursery, and at the fact that neither Hawkspirit or Amberpaw had given them any updates.

Finally, Amberpaw's cream colored fur could be seen through the entrance the nursery. She ducked her head out, made eye contact with Skyfall, and used her ear to beckon her into the nursery.

Nervousness shot through her. She wasn't sure what she was walking into. Flowermoon could be dead, her kits could be dead, anything was a possibility. Skyfall was preparing herself for the worst.

Relief washed over her when she saw four kits mewing quietly in a nest near Amberpaw. By the time Skyfall had reached the den, Amberpaw had made her way back to them, and was licking them consistently to keep them warm. Flowermoon was still breathing, but her eyes were closed, and Skyfall assumed she was resting. Two smaller kits were at Hawkspirit's paws, and he was slathering them with herbs, but she was unsure of which ones.

"Oh, great!" Skyfall chirped. Hawkspirit looked up at her. She was expecting his eyes to reflect the same relief that she felt within her, but much to her surprise, they didn't. They reflected something

much more critical. She cocked her head in confusion.

Hawkspirit flicked his tail to Flowermoon's nest and stepped to the side. Skyfall could hardly believe her eyes.

Her nest was filled with blood. Flowermoon's hind legs, lower belly and her tail were stained crimson, her beautiful tortoiseshell fur clouded with red. Skyfall's heart sank, and her eyes darted back up to Hawkspirit, begging for answers.

He beckoned her to follow her to the other side of the nursery, away from Flowermoon's bedside. She followed him quickly, her heart racing.

"She's not going to make it," He whispered, his eyes dark blue pools of sorrow. "But four of her kits are healthy. Two of them may...follow their mother to StarClan."

Skyfall stared at him. She was baffled. She had always known that Flowermoon's delivery was going to be a dangerous one, but she never pictured this. She never pictured seeing the tortoiseshell she-cat coated in her own blood, her kits squirming and squealing, begging for their mother. She knew there was a possibility she would die, but she never realized the truly gruesome scene that would accompany her death. Even out of all the battle injuries she had seen, this seemed much more brutal. A cat was curled up in her nest, a place that was supposed to be safe and comforting, in a pool of her own blood. She didn't know what to say.

Hawkspirit's tail flicked her shoulder. She knew that her mate was trying to comfort her, but couldn't due to peering eyes. Once he had given her a moment to process the information he had told her, he continued.

"She asked to speak with you," Hawkspirit murmured.

"Me?" Skyfall asked, once again feeling the electrifying emotion of shock. "Wouldn't she want the father of her kits?"

"She didn't ask for him," Hawkspirit responded. Skyfall remembered that Flowermoon had kept that tom's identity a secret, but she was

certain that she would have wanted to speak with him at a time like this. He was blissfully unaware that his kits had been born, let alone that Flowermoon was dying before Skyfall's very eyes.

"I - okay," Skyfall stuttered. In all honesty, she didn't want to be the one to talk to Flowermoon, no matter how desperate the situation was. She hardly knew the she-cat, and she had always treated Skyfall quite negatively. She had absolutely no idea what Flowermoon would have to say to her, let alone what could be important enough for her to ask for her by name as she struggled to stay in ThunderClan's campground.

She turned to pad back to Flowermoon's side. She caught the glance of Amberpaw, and Amberpaw's eyes were pools of grief. She could see Amberpaw's heart breaking right in front of her, and the pain in her amber eyes was remarkable. Skyfall prayed to StarClan that this wouldn't turn Amberpaw away from medicine. Most medicine cat apprentices gathered herbs their first day in the medicine den, and here Amberpaw was, watching a new mother waste away before her as she struggled to keep her healthy kits warm.

Hawkspirit returned to the two kits he was working on. Skyfall noticed that one was significantly smaller than the other one. She assumed that that was the smallest kit, the one that Willowleaf had missed in her preparations. Its personal characteristics were hidden, for Hawkspirit had herbs slathered on its fur, and was wrapping it in leaves and moss to desperately warm it up.

Reaching Flowermoon's side, Skyfall stood above her for a moment. Flowermoon didn't seem to notice that Skyfall was there. Glancing uneasily at Hawkspirit, she ducked her head close to the queen's ear and murmured, "Flowermoon, it's Skyfall."

Flowermoon lazily opened her eyes, glancing up at her. She closed them after confirming that Skyfall was there. Skyfall watched Flowermoon intently, waiting for the queen to say the words she had asked for her to hear.

Flowermoon drew in a shaky inhale. Her voice was raspy and faint, her throat dry, despite the few tongue fulls of water she had swallowed earlier. Skyfall stared at her intently, anxiousness

building up within her with each second that passed.

"Don't let Sunstar near my kits," She croaked. Skyfall's stomach dropped at the mention of the ThunderClan leader. "You are the sky that will fall. Please, protect them."

Before Skyfall could come up with a response, Flowermoon's bloodstained body shuttered, her exhale in the form of choppy waves. Her paws curled slightly, and her tortoiseshell pelt laid still.

Skyfall stared at her, disconcerted with what she had just heard and what had just taken place before her eyes. The only thing that reached her senses were the mewling of tiny kits, longing for the mother they would never meet, and the pinkish pale streams of the dawning light shining through the bracken roof.

Hi everyone! I am very sorry for the wait. I really hope you all enjoyed this chapter (well, you know what I mean. It's a sad chapter but I hope it was enjoyable to read!). Please leave any feedback you have below! Anyway, I've been adjusting to college. Since a few of you have been asking, I'll give a little life update here.

College has been...alright. I mean, I don't hate it, but I'm thinking about changing my whole career path..and schools, lol. I know, I'm not even a semester in (barely even a month), but I didn't know for sure what I wanted to do. And now that I think I do, my school doesn't have a program for it, so go figure lol.

My major now is Professional Writing (aka business writing). However, I'm worried that since professional writing isn't creative writing, I won't be happy. Creative writing has my heart and although I am good with words and language in all forms of genres, I think I'll find writing professional documentation just...boring. So, instead I'm thinking I'll become a Diagnostic Medical Sonographer (SOOO different

than what I originally planned, I know!).

I've always had an interest in anatomy and being in the medical field, but I never really had the interest to spend like 2937 years in medical school, and I'm squeamish (so being around sickness regularly and wounds/surgery was just a no). But I feel like being a Sonographer (aka an ultrasound technician) would be a good fit for me because I still get to deal with the interesting parts of the medical field, but without going to med school (in fact, the program is only two years, three with prerequisites). The pay is also really great right out of school, and the field is expected to grow by like 24% in my state by 2024, so I shouldn't have trouble finding a job.

But, as I originally planned, this is all temporary until I manage to write a book that sells and I can make a living off of my written works! I just need a stable career for the meantime, and I hope to enjoy it as well!

Anyway, as I was saying, I really hope you all enjoyed this chapter and are looking forward to what's to come! As always, please vote/comment/share, and thank you all for your continuous patience and support! <3

Kaylin

P.S. Sorry for this unorganized rant!

Chapter 24

Skyfall padded quickly through ThunderClan's icy forest, Hawkspirit at her heels. The forest was lightening up by the moment, the sun beginning to raise up through the canopied forest ceiling.

Almost as soon as Flowermoon had gone to StarClan, Skyfall had to usher Hawkspirit out of the nursery. With dawn quickly approaching, she knew her Clanmates would begin to stir. Hostilities would rise among Sunstar and a few of her anti-ShadowClan Clanmates if they awoke to find Hawkspirit in camp. Skyfall was unsure what Sunstar would do in the event that he had a defenseless ShadowClan medicine cat in his paws, and she did not want to find out.

Willowleaf still hadn't returned. Skyfall imagined that she was stirring from her starry sleep when they departed from camp, and was probably on her way back now. She wasn't sure how she would explain the night's events to her or to her Clan, but her primary focus was getting Hawkspirit safely across the ShadowClan border.

Her paws weighed heavy, with both exhaustion and with heartache. Flowermoon's passing disturbed her deeply. Flowermoon was never particularly kind to Skyfall or her siblings, but she was a Clanmate nonetheless. Her surviving mewling kits would be left without their mother, and whoever her mate was, would learn of her death once they awoke from peaceful dreams this morning. Hawkspirit wasn't sure if the two kits he had pulled aside would survive, but he gave Amberpaw strict instructions on how to care for them until Willowleaf returned to camp. Amberpaw had listened intently, but Skyfall knew the new medicine cat apprentice was scared out of her mind at the thought of taking care of two critically ill kits when her knowledge of medicine was only what Hawkspirit had taught her. It was just an all-around unpleasant situation that did a number on every cat that was involved.

They were almost to the border when a rustling was heard in the bushes. Skyfall's fur stuck up in weary surprise, and she prepared to defend Hawkspirit's presence in ThunderClan's territory. Much to her relief, Willowleaf's tortoiseshell pelt came into view, and her amber eyes looked pleased to see Skyfall - until they shifted to see Hawkspirit.

"Skyfall!" She hissed. "What are you doing? This is ThunderClan terri-"

Skyfall knew that Willowleaf believed that Skyfall had brought Hawkspirit into ThunderClan territory for some reckless prophetical meeting. Or maybe she even suspected that Skyfall hadn't discontinued their then budding relationship like she had told her she had. Skyfall wasn't sure, but she braced herself for the conversation that was about to take place.

"Willowleaf," Hawkspirit murmured, dipping his head in respect. Skyfall knew that part of his head-bow was in condolences, but Willowleaf had no way of detecting that gesture.

"Willowleaf, we need to talk," Skyfall muttered softly. "But first, we need to get Hawkspirit over the border before cats begin to realize he was in camp."

"In camp?" Willowleaf echoed, her eyes wide saucers of worry. Willowleaf's tone reflected her uneasiness. There was no good reason why Hawkspirit could be in ThunderClan's camp, there were only reasons that were varying degrees of bad. "Why was he in camp?"

Hawkspirit and Skyfall began to continue on their way, and Skyfall flicked her tail, beckoning Willowleaf to follow. Their paws carried them at a brisk pace, as Hawkspirit glanced nervously up at the reddening sky as the sun began to climb through the sparse clouds.

"Flowermoon's kits came," Skyfall started, being sure to keep her voice low and soft. She heard Willowleaf's paws stop in their tracks behind her.

Skyfall drew in a deep breath, looking at her paws as she slowed

her own pace down, fully aware of the alarm coursing through Willowleaf's veins. She glanced at Hawkspirit. It appeared he could read her like one of StarClan's messages, as he flicked his tail and began to speak the second after looking at her.

"Four of the kits are healthy," Hawkspirit continued, sensing Skyfall's difficulty in pushing the conversation forward. "Two are unstable. I'm not sure if-"

"Two? Two more?" Willowleaf questioned, her voice quiet. "There was only supposed to be five."

"There was a small kit," Hawkspirit elaborated. "hidden between its littermates in the womb. I'm not surprised you missed it, as it was so much smaller than the other ones."

"A-and Flowermoon?" Willowleaf questioned. Skyfall turned her head to glance at the tortoiseshell she-cat. Just as she had suspected, she was standing a few tail-lengths behind them, her eyes wide and her tail drooping against the frosty bracken floor. Her eyes were amber pools of desperation, with a sheen of hope gleaming within them. Skyfall could barely stand to look at her, as she knew that they were about to rip her of any faith she had in her abilities as a medicine cat.

As an apprentice, Skyfall had wondered if Flowermoon was the third littermate of Willowleaf and Darkface. Willowleaf never spoke of any of her littermates, but she did care immensely for Flowermoon during her time as a queen, more so than she did Featherfur. Skyfall had always thought that the discrepancy in Willowleaf's attention was due to the fact that Flowermoon was expected to have a difficult birth. It became clear to Skyfall now, based on the look in Willowleaf's desperate and hopeful eyes, that her original suspicion had been correct - the two tortoiseshell she-cats were sisters. This nearly ripped Skyfall's heart in two, and she turned away once she heard Hawkspirit begin to speak once more.

"I'm sorry Willowleaf," Hawkspirit began, "but Flowermoon has joined StarClan's ranks."

"No!" Willowleaf immediately wailed, her voice ringing through the

quiet forest. Skyfall cringed, as Hawkspirit was not safe yet, and her outburst was undoubtably audible from camp. This concern for her mate was only a throbbing pain in the back of her mind, however, since she could practically hear Willowleaf's heart shattering into pieces, their glass fragments falling to the frosted floor.

"There's nothing that could be done, Willowleaf," Hawkspirit murmured. "She wouldn't have made it, even if you had been there for her. You anticipated this."

"I left!" Willowleaf exclaimed. "I had a cat that needed my care and I left! I left her!"

Hawkspirit shot Skyfall a glance. Skyfall mustered up some words of comfort. "There's no way you could've known, Willo-"

"I knew it would be any day now!" Willowleaf retorted. "It didn't even cross my mind when I left. I was just so focused on this stupid prophecy, and now Flowermoon's dead!"

"She wouldn't have made it even if you were there," Hawkspirit repeated, an edge of assertiveness in his voice. Skyfall knew that Hawkspirit was trying to get Willowleaf to understand that Flowermoon's death was not her fault. She also knew that nothing her or Hawkspirit said would convince Willowleaf otherwise.

"Don't you get it?" Willowleaf screeched. A few dollops of snow fell from above, a bird having scattered from its spot on a branch, alarmed from Willowleaf's outburst. "I should have been there for her, whether she made it or not! She was my littermate, and above all, my Clanmate! It is my duty to be there for her, and I failed!"

Skyfall shifted on her paws. She desperately wanted to comfort Willowleaf, but she knew that nothing she could say or do would bring solace to the heartbroken medicine cat. Flowermoon's fate created a heavy weight of guilt and regret that Willowleaf would carry on her shoulders until she herself walked with the stars.

Hawkspirit's nose lifted to the sky, either out of concern for the brightening pink sky or in a prayer for Willowleaf. Whichever it was, it refocused Skyfall on the urgent task of getting Hawkspirit

back to ShadowClan territory.

Skyfall shot Willowleaf a worried glance. The tortoiseshell she-cat, having not received a response, had lowered her head in a whirlwind of shame, guilt, regret, and self-pity. Her shoulders slumped, seemingly unable to lift her strong frame under the weight of the night's events. Skyfall drew in a breath, nervous to disrupt the grieving medicine cat, but she knew they could not afford to stand there any longer.

"Willowleaf," Skyfall murmured softly. "If you want to wait here, I can walk back to camp with you once I get Hawkspirit back to ShadowClan territory."

Willowleaf lifted her gaze to meet Skyfall's briefly. "No, I need to get back to camp before anyone notices I was gone. No one knows, right?"

"Rainpetal, Shadepool and I were doing our silent vigils," Skyfall replied. Willowleaf's eyes widened in alarm but before she could say anything, Skyfall continued. "They know the gravity of the situation, they won't tell anyone."

Willowleaf nodded, relief flooding her amber eyes. With a flick of her tail and a duck of gratitude to Hawkspirit, Willowleaf began her trek back to camp. Skyfall's eyes followed the ThunderClan medicine cat for a few moments, and she couldn't help but notice her tail dragging in the frosted undergrowth.

Turning back to Hawkspirit, whose own eyes were flooded with nervousness as the sunlight became brighter and more intense, Skyfall flicked her tail. "We have to hurry," She meowed, bounding past her mate. "Let's go!"

By the time the two companions made their way to the ShadowClan border, Skyfall was sure that dawn patrols would be en route. Hawkspirit turned to her, a soft expression clouding his lake blue eyes.

"It always pains me to part from you," he murmured. He glanced at his paws before bringing his gaze up to meet hers once more.

"It pains me too," Skyfall meowed.

"It felt as though we were in the same Clan," Hawkspirit continued. "It came so naturally to me. To be by your side doing my duty to 'my' Clan, you know?"

Skyfall nodded. She couldn't help but notice the irony in Hawkspirit's words. Even if they were from the same Clan, their union still would not be acknowledged by StarClan. Regardless of Hawkspirt's Clan, he was still a medicine cat. It was still forbidden.

"You should get back to camp," Skyfall meowed, touching her nose to his in farewell. "I have to return as well, before anyone notices I'm missing."

Her gaze held on to his for a few moments longer than what was necessary. She wanted to hold onto this image in front of her, because as Hawkspirit had just pointed out, the time of their next meeting was uncertain.

As Hawkspirit was padding away, Skyfall called out a thank-you for all his help. Hawskspirit waved his tail in acknowledgment. She stood there, watching his strong silhouette fade into the distance, his departure tearing at her heartstrings - an additional cloud of sadness raining over her.

I feel like my author's notes are annoying and unneeded, so I'll keep this short - still working on the Instagram/email for the art submissions, will make an announcement on my page when it is up and running! Thanks for reading! <3

Kaylin

Chapter 25

Skyfall was almost back to camp when she heard wailing coming from within ThunderClan's natural enclosure. After she had bade Hawkspirit farewell, her paws had carried her at a brisk pace. However, she came to an abrupt stop when she heard the grief of her Clanmates radiate throughout the forest.

She was so determined to get back to camp that she hadn't even thought of what would meet her when she returned. She hadn't yet processed that one of her Clanmates had passed away, as the night's events had consumed her and she had felt like this nightmare would be over once Hawkspirit left undetected. She hadn't had enough time to realize that her Clan would be devastated at the passing of Flowermoon, potentially the passing of two of her newborn kits, or that Flowermoon really wouldn't be around any longer.

Skyfall was fortunate that she had not experienced much loss during her journey from kit to warrior. The first cat that had joined StarClan in her lifetime was Moonfur. She didn't particularly remember the beautiful young she-cat, but her death had made such an impact on her life. She then experienced the loss of Sandstar, but admittedly, it did not feel like Sandstar had left her. The former ThunderClan leader still visited her fairly regularly in her dreams to guide her through the mysterious waters of the prophecy. ThunderClan then lost Hawkeye in battle, but again, Skyfall had no relationship to the tom. Skyfall had yet to lose someone close to her. And for that, she was blessed.

Skyfall braced herself as she ducked through the gorse tunnel. Unsurprisingly, there was a crowd of cats mobbed outside of the nursery, Willowleaf standing at its entrance. Skyfall was relieved that the news of Flowermoon's passing had already broken by the time she arrived to camp, because it meant no one noticed her as she slipped slyly back into camp.

"There was nothing that could have been done," Willowleaf meowed to the group of cats in front of her. Skyfall could hear the trembling in Willowleaf's voice as she tried to keep it together. She knew the tortoiseshell she-cat must be drowning in guilt, from both not being there for Flowermoon and now for lying to her Clanmates. Skyfall knew that Willowleaf hadn't technically lied, as no cat would think to ask Willowleaf if she had been there. Despite that, she knew Willowleaf considered pretending she was there when she wasn't a lie.

"Skyfall!" A familiar voice was calling out to her. She turned her head to see the tired, yet grieving, eyes of Rainpetal. The light gray she-cat looked terrible. She, like Skyfall, was not close or even fond of Flowermoon. But with the lack of sleep and the high stress situation of it all, it was obviously taking its toll on her. Rainpetal's fur was slightly matted and untamed, her blue eyes somberly heavy. Her voice was hushed as she got closer. "Did Hawkspirit make it back?"

"Yes," She whispered back. "We ran into Willowleaf on the way to the border. We explained everything to her. She's heartbroken, obviously, but our tracks should be covered."

Rainpetal nodded. It appeared as though she was about to say something until her eyes focused on something behind Skyfall. Skyfall turned around, cautious about continuing on their conversation, and was glad she did. Sunstar was sitting on the Highrock, watching the gathering of cats outside the nursery, listening to Willowleaf answering questions. His eyes were narrowed as he observed.

Listening in, Skyfall could hear Willowleaf discussing the plans for Flowermoon's kits. "Four are strong and healthy, and need no care besides for that of a mother. Featherfur has graciously agreed to stay in the nursery until the kits reach their apprenticeships." Willowleaf inhaled sharply before continuing. "The two kits that are in unstable conditions will reside with me in the medicine den, with the help of Featherfur visiting them for affection and feedings. Amberpaw will help supervise their condition. There is no telling of their future." Willowleaf's eyes sank to the ground as she spoke those last few words. Concerned murmurs rippled through the Clan

before her, before one voice hissed in protest.

"Amberpaw just became an apprentice yesterday!" Firesoul snapped. "How is she supposed to watch over them?"

Willowleaf's eyes narrowed as she stared back at the orange tom. She was about to respond when the defensive voices of Featherfur and Bumblefoot erupted from the other side of the group.

"She will do her best!" Featherfur declared at the same time Bumblefoot spat, "She can do better than you could!"

Firesoul looked as though he was going to respond to the bursts of outrage at his comment, but Willowleaf spoke up before his words could leap off of his sharp tongue. "Amberpaw will be under my supervision, as will the kits," She explained slowly, her amber eyes lit with annoyance. "This will be a beneficial learning experience for Amberpaw. A second set of eyes will be a tremendous help, no matter their experience level." The tortoiseshell medicine cat paused briefly before continuing. "How would you like it if your Clanmates doubted your abilities if there happened to have been a battle the first day of your apprenticeship, Firesoul?"

Firesoul didn't respond. He avoided eye contact with Willowleaf, but his ears were still back, symbolic of his disapproval. Featherfur and Bumblefoot flicked their tails approvingly at Willowleaf's response. Amberpaw, who had been standing awkwardly next to Willowleaf through the whole ordeal, shifted on her paws uncomfortably. Once again, Skyfall's heart ached for her. No other apprentice had been the subject of such doubt on their first day, especially after such a stressful night. ThunderClan, however, did not realize just how stressful Amberpaw's night had been. *Either way*, Skyfall concluded, *Firesoul's outburst was unfair and inappropriate.*

Skyfall's eyes shifted back to the ThunderClan leader. His eyes were shielded with the coldness of his stare. No emotion escaped through his expression. Skyfall flicked her tail, unsettled by Sunstar's distant demeanor. Sunstar was always distant, but this coolness towards another cat being in a position of authority was unusual. Anyhow, why wasn't Sunstar at least pretending to care about Flowermoon's

passing and the futures of her kits?

Skyfall scoffed unintentionally. Her scoff turned several heads and paused Willowleaf's words. She stared blankly at the eyes facing her before shaking her head and staring down at the ground. She tried to pass it off as an outburst of grief and disbelief. She was unsure if the judging eyes believed it, but they retreated their attention off of her, which is all that really mattered.

Willowleaf continued informing the Clan on all of the necessary details on the upcoming proceedings. Skyfall's mind wandered elsewhere, as she was so exhausted that she kept swaying back and forth due to unsteadiness. She was unaware of Rainpetal doing the same thing until their shoulders collided accidentally. Both she-cats were instantly alert, staring blankly at each other before rejoining their attention with the Clan.

After Willowleaf had concluded her announcements, she sharply looked up at the ThunderClan leader. His eyes were still guarded and stern as he met her gaze. She cleared her throat, awkwardly shifting the conversation over to him. "Sunstar will now announce details of the vigil."

The ThunderClan leader held her stare for a few moments. The ordeal was uncomfortable, as those few moments truly felt longer than the night before had. A couple cats shifted on their paws, some more flicked their ears, but all stared up at the fiery tom.

"Yes," Sunstar finally meowed, his voice ominously deep. His stature was firm, guarded, stand-offish. The ThunderClan leader was firmly planted in his seat, but Skyfall would not put it past him to turn around and retreat to his den at any moment. Skyfall's eyes narrowed as she studied him, as he was so complex it was difficult to get any sort of reading on him whatsoever.

"We will share tongues with Flowermoon for the final time at sunhigh." He continued. Murmurs of approval rose from the crowd and met his ears. He, too, nodded approvingly. Skyfall was slightly taken aback by that, as that was potentially the first time that the ThunderClan leader had communicated back to the mass of his Clan in that manner. Normally, the orange tom held a position of

superiority, as he only addressed the Clan, and never responded to them.

As usual, Skyfall's wide eyes scanned the crowd, looking for any signs that other cats had noticed what she had. However, this time, her realization seemed futile. The only emotions displayed on her Clanmates' faces were ones of grief, heartbreak, anticipation, and sorrow. The fur on her back ruffled slightly as frustration pooled in her paws.

She brought her attention back to the ThunderClan leader as he continued. "Per tradition, a vigil will be held tonight in honor of Flowermoon's life," he continued. "Whoever would like to participate is welcome."

"I will be keeping vigil," Willowleaf announced. Sunstar flicked his tail. Several other cats joined in. Skyfall knew that Flowermoon did not have very many close ties within the Clan, but she was glad that a few acquaintances were stepping up. Perhaps she would have too, if not for the fact she kept vigil the night before.

Rainpetal nearly flopped over at the mention of another all night vigil. Shadepool was seated on the other side of the crowd, her green eyes determined to stay awake. Skyfall, too, was eager to retire to her nest. As much as she wanted to support Flowermoon, as the tortoiseshell she-cat had entrusted the lives of her kits to her, she physically could not do it. *I hope Flowermoon would understand*, she thought to herself. *After all, I am doing quite a big favor for her.* She snickered, as she knew that Flowermoon would ultimately be unforgiving of Skyfall missing her vigil.

~*~

Minutes felt like hours as the morning elapsed. Russetsky had relieved Skyfall and her sisters of their patrol duties for the day, as she knew her kits had stayed up all night. Skyfall was grateful, as she was unsure if she could even make it through another trek through the territory. She was aware that a few of the older Clanmates, such as Firesoul and Stormpelt, did not approve of Russetsky letting the three sisters rest. Skyfall understood their disapproval, because this was their first morning as warriors and

here they were, lazily lounging around camp. She knew that Russetsky had probably only allowed them to stay in because she was thinking with her motherly brain instead of her deputy brain, but Skyfall was appreciative regardless.

Skyfall's eyes watched as Firesoul and Mousetail carried Flowermoon's body to the clearing. The Clan fell silent after seeing them exit the medicine den. Willowleaf had expertly treated Flowermoon's body with mint and lavender to prepare the fallen queen for her Clan. Willowleaf had received a delivery from Aquamist, the RiverClan medicine cat, shortly after the Clan meeting. Aquamist had gifted Willowleaf some goatweed to help her manage her agonizing grief. Skyfall was unsure how RiverClan knew about Flowermoon's passing so soon, but she figured Hawkspirit and Nightflare must have conversed with Aquamist and her apprentice.

Once Flowermoon's body was gently set down, Willowleaf silently approached her sister. In the medicine cat's mouth was a beautiful celandine flower picked carefully from ThunderClan's territory. It was a miracle that one was able to be found in such pristine condition during leafbare. Skyfall believed that it had to have been a gift from StarClan. Willowleaf carefully tucked the flower under her littermate's ear, pinning it against the ground. Its golden color complimented the golden patches in Flowermoon's fur gorgeously. Upon witnessing the act, Skyfall realized that Flowermoon was indeed a flower within the Clan. She was quiet and reserved, her presence the essence of tranquility, but once she was gone, she was dearly missed.

Sunstar watched Willowleaf's gesture and flicked his tail approvingly. Again, Skyfall was taken aback by any interest the ThunderClan leader suddenly had in his Clan. She was unsure why he suddenly cared, but she decided that she should be appreciative. As wicked as she knew the ThunderClan leader was, Flowermoon deserved his respect for her life. He was still her leader.

Before long the Clan began sharing tongues with Flowermoon for the last time. When it was her turn to rasp her tongue over her Clanmate's shoulder, the she-cat's final words loomed over her. She knew that Flowermoon was long gone from ThunderClan's territory,

but the echoing words within her mind brought her spirit back to life. It shook her, but she kept her composure, being sure not to disrupt such a mundane and mournful ceremony.

After all of ThunderClan had paid their respects, Appleleaf approached, getting ready to carry Flowermoon to her final resting place. Stormpelt joined him. Although he was not quite an elder, Stormpelt was on the brink of turning in. He was the eldest warrior in the Clan, so he felt it was his duty to help Appleleaf, as the tom was unable to carry her by himself.

The Clan watched as the two graying toms carried Flowermoon's body away. Willowleaf stifled a wail. Sunstar's eyes loomed after them. Skyfall's gaze found the celandine flower, now a beacon of vivid color against the snowy clearing; Flowermoon's absence left it in solitude.

~*~

Clan life had bustled on after Flowermoon's burial. The air was still crisply somber, but ThunderClan had no choice but to edge forward. Patrols patrolled, hunters hunted, and finally, the sun was falling.

Skyfall and her sisters had been in their nests before the sun decided to step down from its place. The three sisters were beyond ready for sleep to warmly encompass them. Now that it was acceptable for them to finally slip into that long awaited slumber, Rainpetal and Shadepool were already snoring away. Skyfall took a bit longer to settle down, as she wanted to wait for the vigil to begin before she fell into a deep sleep. She felt obligated to at least do that for Flowermoon.

As darkness began to sweep over the clearing, the camp's activity began to cease as those preparing to keep vigil assumed their positions. Skyfall, curling up, observed casually as she looked forward to her much needed rest. She saw the tortoiseshell pelt of Willowleaf sitting outside of the medicine den. She knew Amberpaw was likely staying awake to watch over Flowermoon's two unstable kits in the medicine den. Her eyes travelled and found a few cats that had no particular relationship to Flowermoon, but

wanted to pay their respects. These cats were Flarecloud, Bramblefrost, Stormpelt, and -

Who is that? Skyfall's eyes snapped open from being half-closed. Her eyes had met amber pearls hidden in the bracken. Skyfall's exhausted mind first thought that it was an intruder, but a few moments later she realized that she was meeting the gaze of Darkface. His shining eyes blinked slowly at her once before breaking their connection. Skyfall thought it was odd that Darkface had travelled so far to sit with a Clan that was technically no longer his, but then her heart warmed at the thought that Darkface had decided to sit vigil for his fallen littermate. Willowleaf was doing the same, so why did she think it was unusual for him to do it as well? Guilt pricked at her paws momentarily. *Darkface is ThunderClan*, she silently declared. *And this is his sister.*

Once the adrenaline had began fading from her limbs, Skyfall once again went to close her eyes, her alarm having dissolved. However, upon blinking once more, she came across another pair of mysterious eyes she was not expecting to see. A mrrow of surprise escaped her throat as she saw a pair of emerald eyes shining in the brimming moonlight. Like Darkface's, the eyes were hidden in the safety of ThunderClan's camp, their presence stealthy and precise, fox-like. However, contrary to Darkface's, these eyes did not meet hers, as they were focused heavily on the spot in the clearing Flowermoon had been laying hours earlier.

It was no secret who those eyes belonged to. Their position in the camp had given it away to Skyfall immediately. Their presence should not have been shocking, and yet it was, because it was so unusual for their character. But the unknown pertained to one thing - what were they doing, keeping vigil for a warrior they had never spoken to?

What are you doing, Sunstar?

HIII! Here's Chapter 25! I am so sorry that it took so long, and I am also really sorry if this chapter seems choppy, it was written over like 10 different sessions. It has been completed for about a day now, but I've spent hours picking at it to try to improve the quality. All in all I still am not a fan of it, but

the story must go on & I've left you all waiting long enough.

Thanks so much for reading and for being patient! Don't forget to vote and comment. <3

P.S. I could have SWORN I made Stormpelt an elder already but I wasn't able to find it, so if he's already an elder please let me know so I can change it :')

Chapter 26

Skyfall awoke at daybreak, her body fresh with rejuvenation. The weight that dragged her body down was finally lifted, and her jaws opened to let a powerful yawn escape. Rainpetal and Shadepool were still peacefully snoozing away, despite having gone to sleep before her.

Skyfall lifted her head. She was only slightly aware that one of her ears was bent and her fur was ruffled from the deep sleep she so wonderfully enjoyed. Her eyes, only half open, stared blankly at the bramble den as she tried to load her thoughts. She had no idea where her life had left off - she knew nothing besides that she belonged to ThunderClan.

As her mind slowly woke up, the events from the following few days washed over her. Getting her warrior name, Sunstar knowing about the prophecy, Flowermoon having her kits, sneaking Hawkspirit into ThunderClan's camp, Flowermoon dying, Sunstar sitting vigil for her. It was all a whirlwind of confusion, and hardly any of it even seemed real.

Climbing to her paws and stretching, Skyfall emerged into the clearing. The rising sun was bright in her eyes, and she couldn't help but squint. Shadowy figures danced in her vision, her eyes being unable to focus on them. Before long, the familiar call of her mother reached her ears.

"Skyfall!" Russetsky chirped, racing over to her. "You are on dawn patrol with Bramblefrost and Brackenpaw." Hesitating before continuing, Russetsky whispered, "I'm glad you enjoyed your sleep, but you should probably flatten your fur before you go."

Despite Russetsky's hushed tone, a few mrrows and chuckles reached her ears. Upon hearing her Clanmates' amusement, she was painfully aware that she was a laughing spectacle. Unsurprisingly, the source of her embarrassment came from ThunderClan's older cats, such as Appleleaf and Jaysoul, who clearly had more dignity

than she when it came to grooming.

Flicking her tail, Skyfall got to work at smoothing out her pelt. Once she began rasping her tongue over her fur, she realized just how untidy it was. Even more embarrassment and dismay set her ears on fire. How could she have left the warriors' den looking like this?

Thankfully, after a few moments, the spotlight was taken off of her as Clan life buzzed onwards. Bramblefrost was lecturing Brackenpaw at the gorse tunnel, waiting for Skyfall to join them. Excitement pricked at her paws as she finished up. She was looking forward to spending some time with her father, as it felt like she never spent enough time with him. She also thoroughly enjoyed Brackenpaw's company, and has since he was a newborn kit. But most importantly, she was looking forward to the sense of normality that the patrol would bring. The last couple of days had been such a whirlwind that Skyfall had lost her sense on what being a warrior felt like.

Ah! Skyfall exclaimed to herself, the realization hitting her that she, in fact, did not know what being a warrior felt like. *My first patrol as a warrior!*

Her fur now shining against the light of the rising sun, Skyfall had a pep in her step as she approached her patrol. *Finally, something to look forward to!*

Bramblefrost's eyes lit up as his gaze found Skyfall. Her heart warmed as she comprehended that her father was even more excited to go on this patrol with her than she was. Upon seeing his mentor's attention shift, Brackenpaw turned his sight to her also. His blue eyes brightened up as she approached.

"Hi, Skyfall!" The sand-colored tom greeted. Bramblefrost dipped his head, a gesture Skyfall thought was a little extra.

"Hello!" She chirped, returning her father's motion. Before she could manage to muster another word, Bramblefrost began speaking.

"So!" The dark colored warrior began. "We are just going to be

patrolling the borders, nothing special." Bramblefrost explained. "However, since this is Brackenpaw's first patrol, I want to go a little slower than usual so I can teach him lessons along the way." Brackenpaw's giddiness was evident as he shifted excitedly on his paws. "Skyfall, having just earned your warrior name, I assume you can be of assistance?"

"Of course," Skyfall responded cooly. She, too, was now very thrilled. However, she made sure to keep her excitement under wraps. She just earned her warrior status, and she needed to reflect its maturity.

"Very well," Bramblefrost nodded. "Off we go!"

The three ThunderClan cats ducked out of the gorse tunnel. Sunlight was washing over the forest, reflecting off of the snow that still plagued the territory. Skyfall's ears perked at the sound of birds rustling in the trees above, but she kept her focus. This was a border patrol, and she needed to stay on track for Brackenpaw's sake.

Bramblefrost's strong stature led the patrol, with his apprentice following him at a close distance. Brackenpaw's eyes were all over as he took in the territory for the second time. Skyfall, bringing up the rear, could see his head turning every which way - to the left, right, up, down, and everywhere in between. She found it amusing, as she remembered her first patrol. Sure, touring the territory for the first time as a fresh apprentice was exciting, but it was a whole new feeling to be apart of a patrol. It made a new apprentice feel like they were actually apart of the Clan, and as if they were being useful for the first time.

Brackenpaw was not alone in his feeling. Skyfall was also taking in an unprecedented feeling. For the first time, she was not being "babied". Of course, apprentices grow in their independency through their apprenticeships, but there was always someone superior supervising, even at a distance. Now she was really on her own, no one was responsible for her - besides for ThunderClan as a whole.

Skyfall knew the moment they stepped out of camp that

Bramblefrost was heading towards WindClan's territory first, which was typical. She wondered if Brackenpaw had picked up on that, or if he was too absorbed in the little details of the scenery around him. Almost as if he had read her mind, Bramblefrost's voice reached her ears.

"Usually, when we patrol the borders, we go from WindClan's territory around to ShadowClan's," Bramblefrost explained, glancing briefly over his shoulder. Brackenpaw's wandering eyes settled on his mentor, intently taking in this new information. "So, as you may already know, we're heading to the WindClan border now."

Brackenpaw nodded, although Bramblefrost couldn't see him. She could tell the black-striped apprentice was trying to act "professional", as he had taken note of the serious atmosphere of the patrol. Skyfall recollected that depending on who was on the patrol with her, they'd laugh and joke around. But given that this was her first warrior patrol, she decided it was best to keep the focused teaching tone that Bramblefrost had created and to save the banter for later.

The sun continued to brighten the world around them. The snow that Skyfall was so terribly sick of was sparkling shades of pink and orange against the dawn sky. Skyfall was painfully aware that her breath was creating visible clouds in front of her. The harsh leafbare was not letting up.

As the patrol progressed further through the territory, Skyfall noticed the patch of celandine flowers that Willowleaf had gotten Flowermoon's flower from. The miracle of flowers in such a harsh leafbare was fading, as the flowers had already began to shrivel and brown. Frost coated them from stem to petal. Sadness tugged at Skyfall's heart, as it was another reminder that the tortoiseshell she-cat was eternally absent from ThunderClan.

Naturally, the image of Flowermoon sent Skyfall's mind to think of Willowleaf. Skyfall hoped that her friend was doing better, but she ultimately knew that the ThunderClan medicine cat was drowning in her own guilt. Skyfall wanted to scream at Willowleaf that it wasn't her fault once more, but she knew Willowleaf would not believe her. If there was one thing that Willowleaf took seriously, it

was her duty as a medicine cat. Skyfall observed that Willowleaf never made excuses for her behavior, and this was certainly no exception.

Her thoughts began sliding down a slippery slope. After the image of Willowleaf grieving in her den came Flowermoon's newborn kits. Skyfall was unaware of basically everything about Flowermoon's litter besides how many of them there were and that two of them had unsure futures. She had no idea what gender they were or what their names would be or even what they looked like. She had no idea if anyone knew besides for Willowleaf, Hawkspirit, and Amberpaw.

Arriving at the WindClan border, Bramblefrost began explaining to Brackenpaw how and where ThunderClan marks their borders. The striped tom excitedly listened. Skyfall opened her mouth to scent the air, but admittedly, half her attention was elsewhere. Images of Flowermoon's bloody body and her herb-slathered kits came at her in flashes. The air tasting unremarkable only fueled the fire within her mind.

She could hear Flowermoon's last words echoing around between her ears. Flowermoon left Skyfall with the responsibility to keep her kits safe from Sunstar. She obviously knew Sunstar was dangerous, that was out of the question. What Skyfall did not understand was how Flowermoon knew that.

A rush of frustration washed over her. The prophecy was about her, and yet here she was, miserably behind. How did Flowermoon and Sunstar know things that she did not? Why didn't StarClan do a better job preparing for the darkness brewing behind closed borders? How was she supposed to do a job, most of which she was still unclear on what it was, when she didn't have the means and knowledge necessary to do so?

Skyfall also realized that her best asset was now going to be plagued with distraction. Willowleaf was nearly as focused on the prophecy as Skyfall was, to the point where she made a grave mistake when it came to Flowermoon. Another thing Willowleaf did was never make the same mistake twice. She would never allow her center of attention shift from her true duties of a medicine cat ever

again.

Panic struck Skyfall suddenly. Willowleaf had been her backbone, and now she was left unsupported. StarClan knew even less than Skyfall did, so they were useless. Was she going to have to face the prophecy alone?

She drew in a deep breath. There was really nothing she could do about this situation besides to help Willowleaf deal with her own personal hurdles so they could also face the prophecy together. Determination flooded through her. She realized that Willowleaf now needed her beyond the fulfillment of the prophecy. She needed her as a friend. *And I will be there,* she declared. *I will help her fight any battle she faces, tooth and nail - just as she has done for me.*

Her focus was no longer just on her. Yes, the prophecy was important, and it tugged at her with a sense of urgency she had never experienced before. But how were her and Willowleaf supposed to tackle the prophecy when Willowleaf is bound to struggle tackling her grief and guilt? The two she-cats would help each other stand through any battle they faced, so that they both will reign triumphant and proud.

"Skyfall?" Bramblefrost called. Skyfall snapped out of her thoughts, her eyes meeting two blue pairs looking back at her. The two toms were getting ready to move on to continue marking the border. Nodding decisively, she began to trot over to them.

"Coming!" She called.

Wow, an update on time? Whaaaaaaat?

I hope you're ready for a lot more of these regularly scheduled updates because unfortunately, I have to take a semester off of college. As you know, I am transferring schools *and* programs, and the break between the semesters was too short for me to wrap up all of my ties at my old school & then placement test, schedule, and register at my new school before the semester started. I am really devastated by this, but I know God's timing & plan is better than mine. As long as I get my prerequisites done by December, I am still on track to graduate my program

at the originally scheduled date. Please pray I manage to do this and that it goes smoothly!

In the meantime, I plan to work and pre-write chapters. As always, thanks for voting, commenting, and sharing! <3

P.S. I am working on trying to write longer chapters! This one was longer than they usually are, and I still feel like it was terribly short. I'm sorry! Longer chapters are coming. <3

Chapter 27

The remainder of the patrol was mainly uneventful. Bramblefrost definitely took his time, as promised, making sure to explain everything in detail to Brackenpaw. Most of it was serious information, like important markers and border lines, but he also told some amusing stories about his time in ThunderClan. Whatever it was, Bramblefrost made sure to make learning exciting, which Skyfall could tell Brackenpaw appreciated.

When marking the ShadowClan scent line, Skyfall's eyes flew longingly over the border. Her heart ached when she pictured Hawkspirit living his life without her by his side. She could see him so clearly, sorting herbs into neat piles, his eyes focused as he did so. She wished that she could thank him again for the help he gave her with Flowermoon, but she was unsure when she could see him again. There would be another Gathering soon, and she hoped that she would be chosen to go.

Returning to camp, Skyfall found that her sisters were now awake. They were preparing to head out on a hunting patrol with Blizzardfur and Spottedpaw. She waved her tail in greeting, but she did not stop for conversation. She was on her way to the medicine den, where she was going to attempt to talk to Willowleaf. She was just about to duck through the frosted lichen when Bumblefoot ducked out.

"Skyfall," He meowed in surprise, flicking his tail. "Something wrong?"

Skyfall stared at him quizzically for a few moments, wondering why he would ask her that. It took her a minute to finally realize that warriors only go to the medicine den when they are sick or injured. Her relationship with Willowleaf was so normal to her that she did not realize it was unusual or unforeseen to her Clanmates.

As she obviously could not say that she needed to talk to Willowleaf both about her guilt and her trip to the Moonpool, she stumbled

over her words. Finally, she managed to spit out, "Er, is something wrong with you? Why were you in the medicine den?"

She realized how asinine her response was right after she had said it. Bumblefoot cocked his head slightly in confusion, and flicked his ear in annoyance. Skyfall detected an edge to his tone. "I was visiting with Amberpaw," He meowed slowly. *Of course! She is his daughter!*

Skyfall was about to mutter an excuse for her ignorance when he continued, "and visiting with the two kits in Willowleaf's care. Since Featherfur is staying in the nursery to raise the litter, it is as though they are my own."

Skyfall's eyes widened in surprise. Her mind had been so preoccupied that she had not even stopped to consider Featherfur and Bumblefoot's recurring roles as parents. She was impressed with Bumblefoot's maturity. After all, he was still quite young, only a few moons older than she - and if StarClan allows, that would mean he would already have ten kits!

"Bumblefoot!" She exclaimed, "Congratulations."

"Thank you," The warrior meowed. She could tell by his tone that he truly meant it. "Of course, I wish they would have been able to have been raised by their mother, but Featherfur and I are blessed to be able to raise another batch of kits into ThunderClan."

"You both do a great job," She complimented. She had always enjoyed the company of the four apprentices that called them parents. A pang of sadness hit her, as she realized she would never be able to have kits of her own that she could raise into strong ThunderClan cats. If she could, she would want them to turn out like Featherfur and Bumblefoot's. "Brackenpaw, Spottedpaw, Amberpaw, and Brightpaw have such great personalities. Flowermoon's kits are fortunate to have you."

Bumblefoot dipped his head in appreciation. He excused himself to the fresh-kill pile, and Skyfall was grateful. As much as she loved talking to Bumblefoot, she had to talk to Willowleaf.

Upon entering the den, the scent of herbs flooded her nose. She shook her head in disgust. She respected medicine cats greatly - after all, how could she not? Without Willowleaf, she would be entirely lost. However, she did not understand how they could deal with herbs everyday. The thought bored her entirely.

At first, she didn't see anyone in the den. Her eyes focusing in the darkened lighting, she finally saw Amberpaw's white tail-tip peaking out from the area where they keep sick and injured cats. Approaching slowly, she meowed, "Hi, Amberpaw. Do you know where Willowleaf is?"

Amberpaw jumped up in surprise, a strange noise escaping from her throat. Skyfall looked at her in amusement. "You scared me, Skyfall!" Amberpaw exclaimed. "She's out gathering more herbs right now. She should be back shortly." The cream colored she-cat was about to turn back to her work before her eyes lit up with stress. "Why, are you sick? Or hurt?"

"Oh, no, I'm okay." Skyfall reassured. It was hard not to notice how tired the she-cat was, and how stressed she looked when faced with another possible patient filled Skyfall with pity. She was hardly out of the nursery and she was dealing with some of the most stressful days even Willowleaf had ever seen. She felt compelled to comfort her. "Amberpaw, you know being a medicine cat is not always like this, right?"

"Like what?" She asked innocently, wrapping her tail around her white dappled paws. Whatever she was working on had clearly lost her interest, as her green eyes were focused intently on Skyfall.

"This...this stressful," Skyfall stumbled. She was unprepared for this conversation. She had rehearsed an entirely different set of words for an entirely different cat before coming in here. "There won't always be critically ill kits, dying queens, other medicine cats being smuggled in, and so much secrecy and uncertainty."

Amberpaw stared at her, and Skyfall could see the thoughts being pondered behind her eyes. Amberpaw had always been the most cautious of her littermates, the most well versed. She knew her words were being processed thoroughly, and she hoped she had

said the right ones.

"How do you know?" Amberpaw finally answered. Skyfall detected a hit of hesitancy within her mew.

"Well," Skyfall answered. "That's a good question, seeing as I am not, and have never been, a medicine cat." She tried to keep a bit of lightheartedness and a hint of humor within the conversation, as she knew Amberpaw had been through a lot. Since everything in her apprenticeship has been so serious, she thought Amberpaw needed a conversation that wasn't so much. "I have been very close with Willowleaf for a long time. It's never been this chaotic, and it won't be forever. I just don't want you to regret making the choice you did."

"I know," Amberpaw chirped. Her quick response took Skyfall by surprise, as she was expecting another long pause. "Willowleaf reassured me of that."

"That's great!" Skyfall exclaimed, relief flooding through her. She had been so worried about Amberpaw's perception of medicine after Flowermoon that she was ecstatic that her passion remained. "You know, the fact that this hasn't shaken you has proven that StarClan chose you for a reason. You will be a great medicine cat!"

"I know that, too," Amberpaw meowed, her shoulders straightening out in pride. Skyfall stifled a mrrow of amusement. Amberpaw was definitely the most knowledgable, but she was also the most proud. *And she has every right to be,* she thought to herself. *I could never do it.*

"Well," Skyfall meowed, turning back towards the entrance of the den. "Please let me know when Willowleaf has returned, I really need to speak with her."

"Okay," Amberpaw responded cooly as Skyfall made her way towards the frosted lichen. Just when she was about to emerge back out into camp, Amberpaw's voice caught her attention once more. "Since you said there won't always be secrets, when are you planning to tell me yours?"

Amberpaw's words froze Skyfall in her tracks. She knew she needed to respond, and fast. However, she had no idea what to say. What secrets were Amberpaw referring to? The prophecy? It only made sense that Willowleaf would have told her new apprentice about StarClan's current message. Or, much to Skyfall's horror, was she referring to Hawkspirit? Why did she even have so many secrets in the first place to the point where she had to play a guessing game?

Skyfall felt the moments ticking on, and sensed Amberpaw's eyes burning into her pelt. Finally, she mustered an entirely lame response. "What are you talking about?"

Skyfall turned her head back to face Amberpaw. She was hesitant to face her directly, as she feared that her body language would reveal whatever secrets Amberpaw thought she knew. *How did I get myself into this mess?* Skyfall hissed to herself. *I just wanted to talk to Willowleaf!*

"Everybody has secrets," Amberpaw calmly responded, her green eyes guarded as they met Skyfall's. Her tail flicked casually.

Skyfall had no idea what to respond. Does she agree, and admit she has information being hidden from the majority of her Clan? Or does she deny it, and try to pointlessly cover up something Amberpaw may already know?

Skyfall jumped as rustling came from behind her. Willowleaf entered the den, her jaws filled with icy herbs. Relief washed over Skyfall as she realized she wouldn't have to answer Amberpaw's question at that moment.

"Hi, Willowleaf!" Amberpaw greeted. "Would you like me to sort those for you?"

Willowleaf gently set the herbs down in front of Amberpaw's paws. Skyfall took a moment to really look at the ThunderClan medicine cat. Her fur, while groomed neatly, did not have its usual shine. Her amber eyes were dull, their usual determined vividness absent. It pained her to know that Willowleaf was probably trying to give off the impression that she was doing great, just merely grieving over the loss of a littermate she had never really been close to, rather

than drowning in guilt over a fatal mistake.

"That'd be great, Amberpaw," Willowleaf responded. "Be very gentle with them. This leafbare is destroying our herb sources in the territory. That's all I was able to manage to get, and they're terribly brittle."

Amberpaw nodded, eagerly getting to work with her sorting. Skyfall remembered how Amberpaw used to love sorting the fresh kill pile when she was a kit. She really was destined to become a medicine cat, as Amberpaw loved even the mundane and tedious tasks of the role.

Willowleaf's eyes caught Skyfall's. She figured why Willowleaf assumed she was there, to talk about her meeting with StarClan in regards to the prophecy. After a casual greeting, Willowleaf took Skyfall to the part of the medicine den where she slept, leaving Amberpaw near the herb storages with her sorting.

The two she-cats sat down, and Willowleaf let out a sigh. "Well, I met with StarClan, and-"

Before Willowleaf could continue, Skyfall interrupted her with a simple, "Willowleaf, how are you doing?"

Willowleaf paused and stared at her. Skyfall could see the turmoil behind her eyes. She knew Willowleaf was trying to figure out whether or not to talk about her grievances or to stick to the prophecy. Eventually, she came to a decision and began to speak.

"Skyfall, I don't know what happened," She confessed. Skyfall immediately understood what she meant. Of course Willowleaf knew what happened, but she didn't understand *how*. "I don't know how I abandoned Flowermoon when I had been anticipating this for moons. I don't know why I did it. This prophecy has taken ahold of me."

"You didn't abandon her," Skyfall began, her preparedness coming in handy. She knew that was not necessarily true, but she was trying to make Willowleaf feel better. "You were acting as a medicine cat. You were going to warn StarClan."

"My first duty as a medicine cat is to ensure my Clan is healthy and well!" She retorted. The frustration was evident in her mew. "And I failed her, my own littermate!"

"You weren't sure if she would have survived anyway, Willowleaf!" Skyfall challenged. There was an edge to her voice, but Skyfall learned from experience that to get anywhere with Willowleaf, you had to be assertive. "You have to remember she wasn't without medical assistance. Hawkspirit helped her to the best of his ability and StarClan still called her!"

"Of course she didn't survive with Hawkspirit," Willowleaf's tail lashed. "He is still merely an apprentice! He had no experience in dealing with a case like this!"

Skyfall felt the sting of her words. She knew deep down that Willowleaf did not mean to insult Hawkspirit and his abilities, but Skyfall took them personally anyway. "Hey! Hawkspirit has his medicine cat name, he was able to handle it! It just took the course StarClan wanted it to!"

Suddenly, Skyfall was embarrassed. Her outburst was quite uncalled for. Sometimes she forgot that her heart belonged to Hawkspirit only in the shadows. She had to recover the situation, and fast. She could see that Willowleaf was taken aback by how personal she took her comments, and she had no room to create suspicion over her relationship with the ShadowClan medicine cat. "I'm just trying to tell you, Willowleaf, that he is just as credible as you are. You being here would not have changed the outcome. You need to forgive yourself. You were warning StarClan about the Dark Forest's forces, and saving the Clans is more important than saving Flowermoon."

Willowleaf flinched at Skyfall's last comment. Skyfall was aware that they sounded harsh, as Flowermoon was Willowleaf's sister, and her life was still valuable. She was just trying to put things into perspective for the tortoiseshell medicine cat - what held more gravity, the death of one cat or the death of the Clans as they knew them?

A long pause stretched between the two she-cats. Willowleaf stared

down at her paws, contemplating Skyfall's words. Eventually, she spoke without responding directly to Skyfall's comment. This was a relief to her, since she knew with Willowleaf's stubbornness, no direct response meant they had truly reached her.

"Let's make sure Flowermoon's death was not in vain, and talk about my conversation with StarClan," Willowleaf murmured. Skyfall nodded in agreement, although she still felt bad about the harshness of their conversation. She never wanted it to escalate to either one of the she-cats getting their feelings hurt, but they were known to bash heads at times. It was simply inevitable.

After a brief pause, both she-cats moving on from their heated conversation, Willowleaf began. "As we suspected, StarClan was unaware that the Dark Forest knew of the prophecy."

Skyfall nodded. This was anticipated. She looked at Willowleaf expectantly, waiting for the tortoiseshell she-cat to continue.

"This is not good, Skyfall," She meowed, her voice low. Skyfall nearly rolled her eyes, and if it wasn't for the grim seriousness in Willowleaf's tone, she would have. Of course it was not good, why did Willowleaf feel the need to reiterate something she already knew? Didn't she know that her warrior duties or Willowleaf's medicine cat duties could end their conversation before it could even start?

"StarClan does not train their warriors for battle like the Dark Forest does," Willowleaf explained. Skyfall pondered this for a moment. While it made perfect sense that StarClan did not train their cats for battle, since it is supposed to be a place of eternal peace, she had never really thought about it. She realized that she really did not know much about StarClan at all. It amazed her that so much of her life had been dictated by StarClan and revolved around them, but she was blatantly unaware about many aspects of their workings. "Many of the spirits within their ranks have not trained in lifetimes."

"And the Dark Forest has been training for moons," Skyfall quietly responded. Willowleaf nodded, an exasperated sigh escaping her lips. Panic ran through Skyfall at the thought of hundreds of

savagely trained spirits attacking innocent StarClan cats, who were unable to defend themselves. "What are we going to do? They're totally defenseless, like mice against a hunting patrol!"

"Upon my warning, StarClan now has time to begin preparing for what is to come," Willowleaf responded. "Of course they knew something was brewing, but they had no way of anticipating something of this magnitude approaching so quickly. No one could have anticipated this. Sunstar actually did us a favor."

Willowleaf's comment nearly caused Skyfall to go up in flames. How dare she give any positive credit to *Sunstar,* of all cats? The more Skyfall thought about it, she realized that Willowleaf was right, as he did give a major clue of the Dark Forest's time table. But still, the thought of painting Sunstar in a positive light made Skyfall want to vomit.

Refocusing herself on the conversation at hand, Skyfall continued. "How are they going to be able to train to the skill level of the Dark Forest?" She questioned, her tail lashing. "You said some of their cats haven't trained in lifetimes!"

"It is going to be difficult," Willowleaf responded, frustration evident in her meow. "They have warriors who have recently joined their ranks in the last few moons, so they will still be sharp. But you are right, the discrepancy between the two forces is distressingly substantial."

"Willowleaf!" Amberpaw's call was heavy with alarm. Willowleaf's ears immediately perked, and before Skyfall could even mention any strategies to conquer their disadvantage, the tortoiseshell medicine cat had already bounded towards Amberpaw's location. Skyfall's tail flicked, her mind buzzing with images of starry pelts laying forever slain in bloodied bracken.

A shiver ripped through her. A few moments had passed before Skyfall concluded that Willowleaf was not returning to finish their conversation. Ducking out of the soft vines that shielded Willowleaf's nest, she found a horrified Amberpaw, and a frantic Willowleaf.

Skyfall froze in her tracks. Her stomach plummeted once the reality of the situation hit her. Before Skyfall could think of another possibly, Amberpaw confirmed the worst through a terrified squeal that shattered Skyfall's heart.

"She isn't breathing!"

Sorry for this dialogue-heavy chapter, but it was needed! More exciting things coming soon.

In case you missed my announcement, the Instagram is open for art submissions (it is @kaylinwc, no underscore). Please DM your Wattpad user to be accepted, I've been getting a lot of sketchy follow requests. kaylinwrites2001 @ gmail.com is the email for art submissions as well.

Thanks for reading! Don't forget to vote and comment! Tell me how I'm doing, both with writing and the storyline please! Feedback is always welcome. <3